

Threats disrupt SAS flights

STOCKHOLM (R) — Three bomb threats forced Scandinavian Airlines System (SAS) to mount one of its tightest security operations ever Monday, disrupting the airline's flights worldwide. An English-speaking caller rang the airline and said an internal flight from Gothenburg in western Sweden could be sabotaged Monday morning, SAS reported. It was the third threat which the airline made public. Although there were delays on all SAS flights Monday because of security checks, no signs of sabotage were found. "But we are taking all the threats seriously and security is stringent at all our airports," airline spokesman John Herbert said. On Saturday, SAS said it had received a letter saying as SAS plane on a domestic route would be attacked because of Sweden's mediating role which led to the United States opening direct talks with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). That threat was followed by a tip-off from Interpol that an unidentified group may be planning to attack one of its planes, causing SAS to alert its staff around the world. Herbert said Swedish secret police had not been able to specify who had made the threat, which came from Budapest.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الرابطة

Vorontsov arrives in Iran

NICOSIA (AP) — A senior Soviet official arrived in Tehran Monday for talks with Iranian-based Afghan rebel leaders, the official Islamic Republic News Agency reported. The agency said First Deputy Foreign Minister Yuri Vorontsov held talks with the Shi'ite alliance following his meetings in Saudi Arabia last month with Burhanuddin Rabbani, leader of the Pakistan-based Mujahedeen alliance. "I am here to exchange views with Iranian officials and leaders of Iran-based Afghan alliance groups on ways to find a solution in principle to the Afghan issue," Vorontsov was quoted as telling reporters on arrival. The Mujahedeen are split into two coalitions, the Iran-based Shi'ite alliance, and the larger, Sunni alliance, based in Pakistan. Last week Rabbani met in Tehran with his Shi'ite counterparts so that both coalitions could present a united front to the Soviets. Last week, Vorontsov had an unprecedented meeting in Rome with the former king of Afghanistan, Mohammad Zahir Shah, who has been mentioned as playing a role in the peacemaking efforts. The Mujahedeen are opposed to any role for the king, who fled to Italy after his overthrow in 1973.

Volume 14 Number 3975

AMMAN TUESDAY JANUARY 3, 1989, JUMADA AL AWWAL 24, 1409

Price: Jordan 100 fils; Syria 1 pound; Lebanon 1 pound; Saudi Arabia 1.50 riyals; UAE 1.50 dirhams; Great Britain 25 pence

Arafat: Joint Arab team to conference

PARIS (Petra) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat has said that five key Arab parties in the Middle East conflict will attend an international peace conference on the Arab-Israeli conflict in a joint delegation.

In an interview with the Paris-based Al Yom Al Saba' published Monday, Arafat said that the PLO was considering a plan to hold a meeting of the five parties — Jordan, Syria, Egypt and Lebanon as well as the Palestinians — to draw up an integrated Arab plan and approach at the international conference, to be attended by the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council and all parties involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The Palestinian position in negotiations will be governed by the resolutions adopted by the Palestine National Council (PNC) on Palestinian national rights, including the right to repatriation, to self-determination and to set up an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, Arafat said.

Arafat said Jordan's decision to sever legal and administrative links with the West Bank had ended all discussions of a joint

Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to peace talks as proposed by Israel recently.

The PLO chairman said Washington and Moscow had agreed on the concept of an international conference and that direct negotiations would be held between Israel and the Arab side within the framework of the conference along the lines of the Geneva talks held in 1977.

Arafat described the recently launched formal contacts between the PLO and the United States as a dialogue and not "negotiations" since Washington has in the past "refused to listen to us and we refused to listen to it."

"Now they are listening to us and we are listening to them," he said. "These are mere exchange of views. However, we realise that when we negotiate with the Israelis we negotiate with the Americans and when we negotiate with the Americans we negotiate with the Israelis," he said.

The next round of talks between the PLO and the U.S. is scheduled to be held in Tunis on Jan. 20 at the same level of representation, Jordan Television said Monday.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Monday holds a meeting with members of a special panel on agriculture (Petra photo)

Prince Hassan calls for plans to replace foreign farm workers

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan held a meeting Monday with members of a committee responsible for the agricultural sector at the Higher Council of Science and Technology (HCST) and members of a centre in charge of agricultural research and transfer of technology sponsored by the Ministry of Agriculture.

The time has come for the ministries of education, higher education and the community colleges in the country to help the work of the researchers by drawing up plans designed to replace non-Jordanian workers in the

agricultural sector with Jordanians, the Crown Prince said. The national research centres in agriculture are now turning their attention to this issue, the Crown Prince noted.

He said there should be a real interaction among developmental sectors, specially in education, health and industry and research centres should help such a process and so stimulate the role of the agricultural sector.

Prince Hassan urged agricultural engineers to help carry out resolutions passed by the various development council meetings and underlined the importance of

providing extension service staff with sufficient guidance instructions.

Minister of Health Zuhair Malhas and Minister of Agriculture Youssef Hamdan Al Jabbar attended the meeting.

The agricultural research centre was established in Jordan in 1985 to conduct research designed to promote farming and to propose new administrative and organisational matters governing agricultural processes.

The centre is also in charge of conveying the results of research to farmers and of laying down plans for development.

Israel tightens policy of gunfire, expulsion, arrests, demolitions

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — The Israeli occupation authorities have moved to push hard its resolve to quell the Palestinian uprising with army gunfire, expulsions, arrests and house demolitions.

Troops Monday knocked down the homes of two Palestinians accused of hurling fire bombs at a military patrol and an Israeli bus in the West Bank's Balata refugee camp.

The two men were among nine Balata residents arrested. All are accused of carrying out anti-Israeli attacks and distributing leaflets on behalf of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), an army spokeswoman said.

Thirteen Palestinians were expelled from the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip to Lebanon Sunday, the 24th anniversary of the first military action by the Palestine Liberation Organisation's mainstream Fatah group.

The 13 were accused of heading popular committees steering the uprising in the occupied territories.

"The fact that (the 13) were deported on Fatah day shows the Israeli determination to fight the organisers and instigators of the intifada," a senior official said.

The 13 were flown by helicopter to the northern edge of Israel's self-declared "security zone" in South Lebanon.

The previous expulsions, the expulsion of eight people on Aug. 2, were also aimed for maximum effect. They coincided with a strike in the occupied territories in protest against just such a

policy. Israel has expelled 49 Palestinians since the uprising erupted and a total of 917 since Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967.

Palestinian sources said troops shot and wounded 12 protesters Monday in the West Bank town of Ramallah and in several areas of the Gaza Strip.

A six-year-old Palestinian girl from Gaza's Nuseirat refugee camp was shot in the head and critically wounded, according to reports.

The army lifted a round-the-clock curfew imposed on the Gaza Strip's 650,000 residents to curb protests on Fatah day.

Palestinians in Gaza City staged a spontaneous general strike Monday, shutting their businesses and public transportation, to protest the expulsions. Six of the expelled were from the Gaza Strip.

The Palestinians from Balata whose homes were wrecked are among nine in the camp detained recently, who are active with Hamas, the army communicate said.

The communiqué did not give the Palestinians' names or specify how their homes were wrecked. Arab news reports said the houses were home to families of 10 and nine people each, and that

they were bulldozed without letting families take out belongings such as furniture.

The reports identified the detainees whose homes were wrecked as Shaker Abdallah and Youssef Kaaby.

In Arab Jerusalem, police fired rubber bullets and tear-gas to disperse stone-throwing protesters.

Egypt criticised Israel Monday for the expulsions. "Israel's violations of Palestinians' human rights... is a negative position which hinders the peace process and encourages extremism," Boutros Ghali, minister of state for foreign affairs, told reporters.

"It (the expulsion) contradicts Israel's welfare and the positive decisions the Palestine Liberation Organisation has taken to consolidate peace, coexistence and a peaceful settlement of the Middle East problem," Ghali added.

Egyptian leaders condemned earlier expulsions in terms similar to those Ghali used Monday. As Ghali spoke, foreign ministry sources said Foreign Minister Esmat Abdul Meguid will meet in Paris next Sunday with his Israeli counterpart, Moshe Arens.

It will be their first meeting since Arens took the foreign affairs portfolio in the cabinet formed by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir last month.

The last meeting at this level took place about three months ago in New York between Abdul Meguid and Shimon Peres, then Israel's foreign minister. Peres became finance minister in the new Israeli government.

AROUND THE WORLD...

Howe starts Gulf visit with call to Israel

KUWAIT (R) — British Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe began a nine-day Gulf tour in Kuwait Monday with a call to Israel to take the next step in the Middle East peace process. In talks with the leaders of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi, Oman and North Yemen, Howe said he would seek views on a broad range of regional concerns, notably the four-month-old ceasefire in the Gulf war and the "improved prospects for a dialogue in the Arab-Israeli dispute." Speaking on arrival in Kuwait, he said he would counsel patience and moderation in Arab-Israeli relations following Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat's renunciation of terrorism and recognition of Israel. Howe, who was met by Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah, said: "The central lesson of the crucially important Arab-Israeli peace process is that it needs to be tackled with great patience and tenacity. Moderation is the key to further progress. The next crucial moves do have to come from Israel."

Israel protests Egyptian accusation

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel told Egypt Monday that an Egyptian newspaper editorial suggesting the Israeli secret service blew up a U.S. airliner could poison relations between the two states. A foreign ministry spokesman said Israel's ambassador in Cairo delivered a letter from Foreign Minister Moshe Arens to his Egyptian counterpart Esmat Abdul Meguid protesting at last Friday's editorial in the semi-official Al Akhbar newspaper. The editorial said Israel was the most likely culprit in the bombing of the Pan Am jet because it wanted to break off the recently started dialogue between the United States and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Soviets to rebuild 111 towns, villages

MOSCOW (R) — Soviet authorities are drawing up plans to rebuild 111 towns and villages damaged in the earthquake that struck Armenia last month, TASS news agency said Monday. All new buildings in the project will be able to withstand tremors up to force 9 on the Mercalli scale, the same strength as the Dec. 7 quake. "Master plans for 111 populated localities in the zone will have been drawn up by Jan. 20," TASS said in a report on a meeting of the Communist Party politburo commission managing the quake's aftermath. The plans will include proposals for houses, clubs, schools, kindergartens, factories, sports complexes and trade centres, TASS said. It said drafts had already been completed for Kirovakan, Leninakan and Spitak.

Libya: U.S. charges pretext to kill Qadhafi

ROME (AP) — The official Libyan news agency JANA said Monday that the United States was using allegations about a chemical weapons plant as a pretext to launch an attack and kill Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi. The agency referred to a report Sunday in the United Arab Emirates daily Al Khaleej that quoted unidentified Arab sources as saying the Americans planned to send a "hit squad" to kill Qadhafi during an attack on Libya. Al Khaleej also claimed an American task force had traipsed in Italy, Spain and aboard U.S. warships in the Mediterranean for the attack it said could come in January. The newspaper said the strike would include bombing attacks on the nuclear research centre at Tajura, and the alleged chemical weapons plant at Rabhat.

Iraq cuts exports to comply with OPEC quota

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq has cut its oil exports by 90,000 barrels per day (bpd) to comply with its new OPEC output quota of 2.64 million bpd, Oil Ministry sources said Monday. Oil Minister Issam Abdul Rahim Al Chalabi promised last month to halt the trucking of 65,000 bpd through Aqaba and 25,000 bpd through Turkey as from Jan. 1.

Rebels reject bid to split Eritrea

NAIROBI (R) — Eritrean rebels Monday rejected a plan by the government of President Mengistu Haile Mariam to split the northern Ethiopian province into two autonomous regions to end a 28-year-old war of independence. The Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) said in a radio broadcast monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation that splitting the province represented an outdated policy of dividing Muslims and Christians.

Kuwait sends condolences to U.S.

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait sent the United States condolences Monday over the Pan American jet crash in which 270 people died and said it condemned terrorism. The Kuwait News Agency said Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah sent the message in a telegram to U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz. It said Sabah called for international cooperation to stop the "dangerous phenomenon" of terrorism.

EEC to launch Mideast peace drive with visits to key parties

PARIS (R) — The European Economic Community (EEC) will begin a Middle East peace initiative immediately with visits to seven countries involved in the conflict, Spanish Foreign Minister Francisco Fernandez Ordonez said Monday.

The central aim of the plan is to organise an international peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations, an idea Israel strongly opposes.

Spain, as president of the EEC council of ministers for the first six months of 1989, is at the helm of the EEC peace initiative announced two weeks ago following Washington's decision to end a ban on contacts with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

The 12-nation community has created a diplomatic "troika" comprising Spain, France and Greece to pursue plans for the international conference. They will represent the EEC in talks with Israel, the PLO and the United States, among others.

"We want to start work (on the peace initiative) immediately. We agreed on a series of visits to seven countries which are part of the conflict," said Ordonez, speaking in Paris after talks with French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas. He did not name the designated states.

Ordonez visited Egypt for talks last Friday. He said he believed Israel would drop its opposition to an international conference, since all other alternatives had been tried.

He said an initial report would be presented to a meeting of EEC foreign ministers in Madrid Feb. 14.

He added that PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat would probably visit Madrid ahead of the ministerial talks, although nothing was yet fixed.

Ordonez, who chairs the EEC council of ministers, has pledged to upgrade community involvement in the peace effort from simply issuing declarations to "active diplomacy."

France is due to take over the presidency of the community for the latter half of the year and the two countries have already announced their intention to collaborate closely.

"We discussed political cooperation, the role of the presidency and of the troika on the international scene, especially in the Middle East," Dumas said.

Pan Am jet carried unchecked post

FRANKFURT (Agencies) — The Pan Am flight which crashed over Scotland killed 270 people last month was carrying post and valuables which had not been checked, the Frankfurt prosecutor's office said Monday.

Spokesman Hubert Harth confirmed a report due to be published this week in the magazine Bunte saying unchecked post and valuables were loaded in Frankfurt on the Boeing 727 flight which flew to London to connect with the doomed Pan Am Boeing 747.

Bunte said in a statement released ahead of publication that the Frankfurt plane contained four sacks of U.S. military post weighing 10 kilograms and a container of documents from the U.S. bank Manufacturers Hanover Trust.

The magazine quoted a report from the prosecutor's office as saying the military post had not been subject to security checks because it was under the constant supervision of U.S. military personnel. The bank documents were cheques and Christmas cards, it added.

Harth said he was "very cross" about the publication of the magazine report, which he said would hinder the office's investigations into whether a bomb had been smuggled in the flight's luggage in Frankfurt.

The London Times said Saturday that investigators were certain luggage containing an explosive device was transferred from the 727 in London to the forward cargo hold of the 747.

Search continues

In Lockerbie, Scotland, searchers recovered part of the tail

Sudan's judges resign

KHARTOUM (R) — Hundreds of Sudanese judges resigned Monday in protest at what they called government interference in their affairs.

The resignations coincided with increasing pressure on Prime Minister Sadeq Al Mahdi from trade and professional union leaders to put an end to five years of civil war in the south.

Judiciary head Mohammad Mirghani Mabrouk told the official Sudan News Agency (SUNA) that all the country's judges had given him their resignations Monday except for supreme court members.

He did not say how many were involved but judicial sources put the number at several hundreds. Up to 40 judges sit in the supreme court.

The mass resignation came three days after civil servants linked to the judiciary began a strike to press for better pay.

The judges' council said the resignations were prompted by a Finance Ministry study to adjust their salaries, which the council said was outside the government's responsibility.

Under the constitution, the judiciary is the responsibility of Sudan's joint presidency, the five-man Supreme Council.

Leaders of Sudan's trade and professional unions told Mahdi Monday that ending the civil war in the south was the only way to put the crisis-plagued country on the path of economic recovery.

Palestinian lawyers protest Israeli treatment of detainees

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Palestinian lawyers said they would refuse to appear in Israeli military courts for one month from Tuesday to protest against lack of concern for the rights of detainees.

"The military authorities have invested tremendous time, energy, resources, manpower and creativity in suppressing the intifada," Bahij Tamimi, head of the Arab Lawyers Committee, told a news conference Monday.

"By contrast, they show such lack of concern or resourcefulness in dealing with the rights of detainees and of justice that we can only see the resulting injustice as a deliberate policy and an additional element in oppressing the people," he said.

"For one month beginning Jan. 3, we will cancel all appearances before the military courts in the occupied territories," Tamimi said.

He said arrests were carried out in conditions which

violated international law and rulings of Israel's own supreme court.

"Whenever an arrest is carried out in the occupied territories the detainee is never informed about the reason for his arrest and if arrested outside his home, his family is not informed," said Tamimi.

He said lawyers were particularly vexed that army courts regularly adjourned cases for up to several months, leaving their clients in jail.

Tamimi said he spoke for all of the approximately 60 lawyers who regularly defend fellow Palestinians accused of activities against the Israeli occupation authorities.

Several other Palestinian lawyers were present at the news conference together with a handful of leftist Israeli lawyers who also handle "security" cases. The Israelis said they would follow the example of their colleagues.

Israeli lawyer Lea Tsemel said there were between 5,000

and 6,000 Palestinians now serving jail terms for security offences with an additional 3,000 awaiting trial.

A further 1,500 prisoners were being held without trial as "administrative detainees," she said.

Lawyers for "security" detainees in the Gaza Strip went on strike for similar reasons nearly a year ago and have since reached an arrangement with military authorities whereby they advise clients but do not enter court themselves.

Tamimi said the West Bank lawyers took their decision with the backing of their clients and after "having met only frustration in all appeals to the heads of the military justice establishment."

Other lawyers' complaints included difficulty in meeting clients, humiliating conditions under which prisoners are brought to court and alleged lack of serious investigation when complaints are pressed about torture in prison.

Peres' austerity programme under fire from both sides

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Critics of a new government austerity plan warned Monday that proposed cuts in the national budget could hurt the army by forcing cuts in weapons purchases or training programmes, Israel Radio reported.

Ministers and legislators of both major political blocs also accused Finance Minister Shimon Peres of making the public nervous by failing to work out all the details of the plan before announcing it Sunday.

Peres' proposal calls for curbing inflation by curtailing cost of living increases to wage earners and cutting about 1 billion shekels (\$600 million) from government spending on the army, schools, hospitals and welfare.

Peres, leader of the Labour Party, said his target was nine per cent inflation by the year's end, or about half of the current annual figure of 18 per cent.

He did not say where spending cuts should be made and left that up to a ministerial committee that was scheduled to convene

Wednesday or Thursday. But Peres began implementing his plan Sunday by slashing subsidies for food and gasoline, which raised the prices of milk, bread and frozen chicken by up to 20 per cent overnight.

The government has also devalued the shekel by 13 per cent since last week as a first step to help revive export industries that were losing profits because of a frozen exchange rate.

The Tel Aviv stock exchange responded nervously to the devaluation and price rises with an unusually high volume of trading reported within an hour of opening Monday, the radio reported.

Israel's economy is experiencing its worst slowdown since 1982, partly because of the Palestinian uprising in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. Gross domestic product rose by only one per cent in 1988.

Israeli news reports said Peres' plan also calls for up to 600 million shekels (\$535 million) to be shaved from the military budget, including 250 million ear-

marked for spending on army operations in the occupied territories during the 13-month Palestinian uprising.

Senior officers criticised these plans, fearing the army may have to cut training, put away a newly drawn up 10-year development plan and slow equipment purchases.

Other planned cuts reportedly include up to 200 million shekels (\$118 million) from the education budget which would mean parents may have to pay tuition for kindergartens and high schools.

Moroccan-born Deputy Prime Minister David Levy of the right-wing Likud bloc criticised the price rises and plans to cut spending on schools and welfare.

"These are things that could tear our society apart and turn us back in progress an entire generation. We must be careful," Levy said on the radio.

Ariel Weinstein, a member of parliament from Likud, said Peres was trying to move too fast without considering the implications.

Najibullah vows to stay, warns rebels

ISLAMABAD (Agencies) — Afghan President Najibullah said his Soviet-backed government will not quit and warned that Western-backed Mujahadeen rebels will be taught a lesson if they continue fighting, the official Bakhtar news agency reported Monday.

The president spoke Sunday night on Afghanistan's state-run radio and television networks as his unilaterally declared ceasefire in the 10-year-old war began.

The rebels have dismissed the ceasefire and vowed to fight on until all Soviet troops leave the country and Najibullah's government is toppled.

Najibullah said "some persons and circles still irresponsibly think" that peace would return if his People's Democratic Party (PDP) government left the scene.

"No, it is not so. Such persons and circles are committing mistakes," he said.

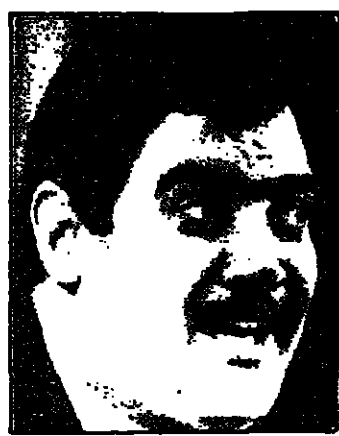
He said bloodshed would go on for a long time because of the rivalries between rebel groups "if the present state of the Republic of Afghanistan pulls out from the political scene."

Najibullah repeated his call to rebels to join a peace conference with his government but he used the toughest language in recent months to them.

"If extremists and the enemies of peace continue their way and insist on intensification of war and bloodshed, we would adopt reciprocal measures and give them tooth-breaking responses," he said.

He said Kabul had followed last April's U.N.-mediated Geneva accords, under which Moscow must complete the withdrawal of more than 100,000 of its troops from Afghanistan by Feb. 15.

"However, we will certainly put into effect one more thing that if the opposition stubbornly keeps on (pursuing) the military



Najibullah

solution they will be given such a lesson that they will realise very soon the futility of their choice," he said.

He said if the rebels agreed a permanent ceasefire would continue as a prelude to peace.

"We are ready to meet with all opposition forces concerned in a peace gathering as a first step towards an understanding and compromise," Najibullah said.

He said he hoped such a conference would "remove all obstacles and barriers created in the past 10 years and pave the way for attaining compromise in all spheres."

He said Kabul had made many proposals to the rebels for dialogue and ending the war.

"We are prepared to hold talks with the opponents based on these proposals or any other reasonable and objective plan, at any suitable place, time and at any level for the sake of the

people and future of the country."

Fighting reported

Afghan troops began the ceasefire Sunday but broke it when guerrillas attacked soldiers in rejection of the one-way truce, Radio Kabul said.

The radio said guerrillas attacked soldiers stationed in the villages of Gushta and Deh Bala in the eastern Nangarhar province. Government troops retaliated, leaving eight guerrillas dead and seven injured, the radio said.

The ceasefire offer was made by Najibullah in a nationwide broadcast Friday.

The Soviet Union announced separately in Moscow Saturday that its troops would join the ceasefire at the start of the New Year. There was no word whether Soviet soldiers were involved in the ceasefire or the reported fighting.

Ahmad Shah, an Afghan Mujahadeen leader, rejected the ceasefire offer Sunday in a statement issued from Peshawar, Pakistan, where his seven-party guerrilla alliance is based.

Rebel unity talks

The Pakistan-based Afghan rebel alliance has invited groups based in Iran to unity talks before considering further discussions with the Soviet Union, rebel leaders said Sunday.

Burhanuddin Rabbani, head of one of seven parties that comprise the alliance, told a news conference the guerrillas wanted "a single platform and a single position" before a second round of talks with the Soviet Union.

Rabbani met Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Yuli Vorontsov in Saudi Arabia Dec. 3 and 4. He said Sunday the alliance would next meet Soviet negotiators in Pakistan but no date had been decided.



New Year in Beirut. Despite the frequent spasms in violence in Lebanon life continues as usual.

Amal-Hizbollah war spreads to S. Lebanon

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Heavy battles flared in southern Lebanon Monday between rival groups only hours after an uneasy truce took hold between their fighters in Beirut.

Amal militiamen and their Hizbollah (Party of God) rivals blasted each other with artillery, mortars, rockets and heavy machineguns across hills in Iqlim Al Tufah, 20 kilometres south-east of Sidon.

The fighting, hours after Syria mediated the truce in Beirut's southern suburbs, was the latest clash in a struggle for supremacy which erupted with the emergence of Hizbollah in 1984.

Residents in Sidon said explosions echoed across the hills of Iqlim Al Tufah, Hizbollah's last bastion in the south since Amal forced about 1,000 Hizbollah fighters out of the area last April.

A Hizbollah statement said Amal had attacked its positions after agreeing last month to end its feud with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

"The attack came after the (Amal leader Nabih) Berri-Arafat accord and after Arafat recognised the Zionist entity and agreed to stop armed struggle against the enemy," the statement said.

Amal sources said the accord stipulated that the PLO, which controls refugee camps near Sidon and used to provide military support for Hizbollah, would stop backing the pro-Iranians.

An Amal spokesman said the fighting Monday flared because Hizbollah was trying to prove

that it still had military muscle in the south.

Situation in Beirut

Amal sources reported sporadic sniper fire Monday in Beirut, where nine people, including a woman and two baby boys, were killed in New Year weekend battles.

As residents ventured out of shelters to stock up on food, officers from the two militias and the Syrian army supervised bulldozers removing barricades on the main highway to Beirut airport.

Amal sources said three Amal fighters were wounded in the Iqlim Al Tufah fighting, which had raised fears of a wider confrontation between Amal and Hizbollah.

Syria deployed hundreds of its troops in Beirut last May to end Amal-Hizbollah fighting there in which 500 people were killed.

The rivalry again erupted in violence for five days in November.

Iran and Syria have mediated scores of ceasefires to quell the power struggle which pits brother against brother.

Hizbollah, believed to hold some of the 17 Western hostages in Beirut's southern suburbs, emerged with Iranian money and arms to challenge Amal for leadership of Lebanon's 1.5 million Shi'ites.

The latest conflict followed talks between Iranian officials and Sheikh Mohammad Mehdi Shamseddine, vice-president of Lebanon's Higher Shi'ite Coun-

cil, during a 20-day visit to Tehran last month.

Shamseddine said he had pressed for an end to the Amal-Hizbollah dispute and an Iranian envoy from Tehran was expected in Lebanon soon.

Amal sources said Hizbollah had started the battles in an attempt to undermine Shamseddine's efforts and to secure a stronger bargaining position in case of any peace settlement.

Several Beirut radio stations said Syria was considering a redeployment of its 4,500 peacekeeping troops in the southern slums to "improve their performance and prevent further fighting."

The fighting was the first serious clash between Amal and Hizbollah since November, when the two sides fought for six days in west and south Beirut, killing 40 people and wounding 87.

Nearly 300 people were killed and 1,000 wounded in a three-week bloodbath between Amal and Hizbollah in May. It was then that Syria sent its troops into the 40-square-kilometre southern suburbs comprising mainly cement shanties.

Police said thousands of panicked residents have been huddled in basements and bomb shelters in the embattled districts of Shiyah, Ghobeiri, Haret Hreik and Mesharrafieh since New Year's Eve.

"I hope 1989 will wipe out all these criminals and let civilised human beings live and breathe safely," said Umm Mohammad, a housewife reached by telephone in Haret Hreik.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

OIC urges support for Palestinians

NICOSIA (R) — The Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) called on the world community Sunday to support Palestinian rights to establish an independent state. A statement issued by the OIC's newly-appointed secretary-general, Hamid Al Ghab, on the OIC's 24th anniversary also praised the one-year Palestinian uprising in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. Ghab, a former prime minister of Niger, was appointed head of the 46-member OIC in place of Sharifuddin Pirzada, who held the post for four years. He called on nations to "shoulder their responsibilities towards achieving security and peace to enable the Palestinian people to establish their independent state."

'Israeli, Chinese foreign ministers to meet'

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens will meet Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen this week during an international conference in Paris on chemical warfare, Israel Radio said Sunday. A foreign ministry spokesman, asked for comment, said he could confirm only that Israel had requested a meeting with Qian. Israel and China do not have diplomatic relations but their foreign ministers have held talks in recent years at the United Nations. The last meeting took place in September. The foreign ministry spokesman said Arens, a hawkish former ambassador to the United States, would meet Egyptian Foreign Minister Esmat Abdul Meguid and U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz during the conference.

Libya, Morocco abolish visa rules

RABAT (R) — Libya and Morocco announced Monday they have abolished visa requirements for their nationals as part of a plan to allow free movement within the Maghreb. The decision took effect Jan. 1 according to the statement signed by Moroccan Interior Minister Driss Basri and Khouildi Lahmadi, a member of the Libyan Revolutionary Council. "The procedure is a step to form an Arab Maghreb with no borders and enables all the people to work, transfer and live freely," said the Libyan news agency JANA, reporting the move. Visas had already been abolished for Moroccans travelling to Algeria or Tunisia.

The Hague to make official contact with PLO

TUNIS (R) — The Netherlands will make its first official contact with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in Tunis next week, a spokesman for the Netherlands embassy said Monday. Henry Wijnaendts, director of political affairs at the Foreign Ministry, and Robert Serry, head of the ministry's Middle East office, will arrive in Tunis Sunday to meet PLO leaders, he said. The meetings will be the first official contact with the PLO though Dutch officials have had informal contacts at lower levels, he added. The diplomats are due to leave Tunis Tuesday. Their programme while in Tunisia had not been decided, he said.

Lahd leaves Israeli hospital

TEL AVIV (R) — The commander of the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia, Antoine Lahd, was to be released from an Israeli hospital Monday after recovering from an assassination attempt, Israel television reported. The television said Lahd, who was shot twice in his home nearly two months ago, would continue physical therapy at a hotel in northern Israel for a few weeks before returning South Lebanon. Lahd visited the home of his Israeli physician on New Year's Eve, his first trip outside the Haifa Hospital since he was admitted Nov. 7. Lahd, a former head of Lebanese army intelligence, took over the Marjayoun-based SLA in 1984 following the death of the militia's founder, Saad Haddad.

Bonn checks U.S. allegations

BONN (R) — West German authorities were Monday investigating whether a West German company helped Libya build an alleged chemical plant which Washington claims is used to produce chemical weapons. "We are taking the matter very seriously," a Foreign Ministry spokesman said. "The evidence is being checked." A U.S. administration official said Sunday President Reagan had raised the matter with Chancellor Helmut Kohl when he visited Washington Nov. 16. The New York Times said U.S. officials had determined that the West German company Imhausen-Chemie, based in the state of Baden-Wuerttemberg, had helped Libya build and design the plant. A spokesman for the local representative of the federal Finance Ministry in Baden-Wuerttemberg said it had begun an investigation into the firm's foreign trade activities. Libya denies the plant will make chemical weapons and has offered a one-off inspection, which Washington has rejected.

Former spy gets top Israeli post

TEL AVIV (R) — A top spy involved in budding but still semi-clandestine contacts between Israel and China has been appointed director general of Israel's foreign ministry, political sources said Monday. Reuven Merhav, 52, a former senior official of Israel's Mossad intelligence agency, was most recently Israel's consul-general in Hong Kong, the sources said. Reports published abroad said Israel had made major gains in the supply of advanced military technology to China in recent years. Merhav's biography says he served in Israeli diplomatic missions in Ethiopia, Iran and Kenya, and in the Israeli "liaison" office in Lebanon 1983 to 1984.

Earthquakes hit rural district in Iran

NICOSIA (R) — More than 40 earthquakes have hit a southern Iranian rural district over the last two days, opening cracks in ceilings but causing no casualties, Tehran Radio said Monday. The radio said tremors continued to hit Bastak area, 960 kilometres southeast of Tehran, until noon Monday.

Bahrain prime minister in Baghdad

BAGHDAD (AP) — Bahrain's prime minister, Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, arrived Monday for talks with Iraqi officials on bilateral relations and the situation in the Gulf region, officials said. Khalifa was met at the airport on arrival by Taha Yassin Ramadan, Iraq's deputy prime minister. The officials said that during his one-day visit, Khalifa also will brief the Iraqi leadership on the outcome of the Gulf Cooperation Council's summit meeting which was held in Bahrain last month.

Turkey to boost security on Syrian border

ANKARA (R) — Turkey will use thermal cameras to detect intruders on its border with Syria, an infiltration route for autonomy-seeking Kurdish rebels, a senior official said Monday.

"The cameras will be used on the 877-kilometre Syrian border within the coming months after experts have been trained," Regional Governor Hayri Kozakcioglu told Anatolian news agency.

Thermal cameras, mostly used at night, detect body heat. They can be mounted on helicopters.

The Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK), which has bases in Lebanon, infiltrates Turkey across the sparsely-populated Syrian border as well as the frontier with Iraq, security sources say.

More than 1,300 people have been killed since 1984 when the PKK launched its latest armed campaign to gain autonomy for Turkey's estimated eight million Kurds.

A total of 119 PKK members were killed and 94 captured last year during clashes with police and soldiers in the east and southeast, the sources said.

They said rebels killed 41 troops and 97 civilians in 1988.

Iran: Gulf states should clear mines

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran's navy chief said Sunday that his country could clear the Gulf of war wreckage and mines laid during the eight-year war with Iraq once Baghdad accepts a stalled U.N. peace resolution, Tehran Television reported.

The broadcast, monitored in Nicosia, quoted Rear Admiral Mohammad-Hussein Malekzadegan as saying that "Iran has the complete readiness and technical capability to clear the Shatt Al Arab of mines."

The estuary of the Shatt Al Arab waterway forms the southern boundary between Iran and Iraq.

"When the time comes to clear the waterway within the

framework of U.N. Resolution 598, and agreements are reached in the peace talks on how to clear the strait, we will start dredging to clear the Shatt of any explosive and dangerous substances," the state-run television quoted Malekzadegan as saying.

Malekzadegan also offered Iranian technical assistance to other Arab Gulf states, stressing that any dredging of Gulf waters must be carried out by states in the region, the television said.

Last September, Malekzadegan claimed the Iranian navy had already cleared its own waters of any mines, and was carrying out operations in international waters.

U.S. issues alert warning to Mediterranean airports

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — U.S. Federal Aviation Administrator Allan McArtor said Sunday airports in Athens and other Mediterranean cities have been warned to be on the alert for known extremists carrying false passports.

Asked about a report Athens airport might be the next target of a commercial airliner bomb attack like the one that destroyed Pan Am Flight 103 over Scotland killing 270 people, McArtor said on U.S. television:

"There is a movement of some known terrorists who have in their possession false passports and this was an alert to the Athens area and to other airports in the Mediterranean as well to be on the alert for these false passports."

He did not elaborate. McArtor said the FAA receives hundreds of reports of threats and that he believed civil aviation in general, not just U.S. airlines, had reason to be concerned.

"I personally believe that the threats now exist to civil aviation, not just to U.S. carriers or toward the U.S. government," he said.

McArtor also said the FAA, which has imposed tougher passenger and luggage screening procedures on U.S. airlines operating in Europe and the Middle East, has asked Western European airlines to impose similar checks.

But he said he did not yet know how his request to the West European airlines would be received.

He also criticised the State Department for notifying diplomats at the U.S. embassy in Moscow earlier this year about a possible attack on a Pan Am flight but not revealing the threat more widely.

McArtor said the FAA warned the State Department and Pan American, as required, but the department did not handle its end properly to give others in Moscow a chance to change their travel plans, as embassy personnel had the opportunity to do.

"I think the State Department is going to look into the action of the Moscow embassy officials that did that, and I personally don't think that was handled very well," he said.

SAS tightens security Scandinavian Airlines Sys-

tem (SAS) has tightened security at airports after receiving a tip-off from Interpol that an unidentified group may be planning an attack against one of its planes, the airline said Monday.

Interpol informed Sweden's secret police of a general threat against SAS which came from Budapest, chief SAS spokesman John Herbert said. He did not elaborate.

"We are taking the threat seriously and security is stringent at all our airports," Herbert said. "But we don't know who has made the threat as the police have not given us all the details."

It was the second threat against SAS in three days. On New Year's Eve the airline said it had received a bomb threat against one of its planes on an

internal flight.

Extra security measures have already caused severe flight delays for the company, which is 50 per cent owned by the governments of Sweden, Norway and Denmark, Herbert said.

Swedish newspapers speculated that an Iranian fundamentalist group was planning an attack as revenge for Sweden's role in recent moves involving the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

But Herbert said he had no such information. Sweden arranged a meeting in Stockholm in early December between PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and American Jews.

He also addressed the United Nations in Geneva, after which the United States agreed to begin talks with the PLO.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 77111-14

PROGRAMME ONE
15:30 Kuran
16:00 Children programmes
17:00 Educational programme
17:30 Religious programme
18:00 News summary in Arabic
18:30 Programme on world news
19:00 Programme on children
19:10 Agricultural programme
19:45 Programme review
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Arabic series
21:30 Programme review
21:40 Local programme
22:30 Arabic programme
23:00 News summary in Arabic

PROGRAMME TWO
18:00 La Chaine
19:00 News in French
19:15 French varieties
19:30 News in Hebrew

20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Who's the Boss
21:10 Sophia and Constance
22:00 News in English
22:30 Adderly

PRAYER TIMES

05:09 Fajr
06:31 Sunrise (Dhuhr)
11:39 Dhuhr
14:24 Asr
16:47 Maghreb
18:09 Isha

CHURCHES

Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 622785.
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 627400.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.
622785.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.
Terrebonne Church Tel. 622366.
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541.

Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 625343.

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.

American International Church Tel. 685326.

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295.

Rainbow Congregation Tel. 822605.
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 815817, 821364.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
It will be partly cloudy to cloudy with possibility of scattered rain and winds will be southeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, it will be partly cloudy with a chance for thundershowers and winds will be southerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./max. temp.

Amman 7 / 7
Aqaba 2 / 15
Deserts 1 / 9
Jordan Valley 6 / 14

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 9, Aqaba 16. Humidity readings: Amman 80 per cent, Aqaba 35 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Muntaser Al Qureini 776258
Dr. Issa Abu Haydar 671123
Dr. Suleiman Al Kayyat 791880
Dr. Basim Al Qaddoumi 646024
Fire Brigade 778336
AI Asena pharmacy 637055
Nairoukh pharmacy 625672

Al Salam pharmacy 626730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660

IRBID:
Dr. Mohammad Al Shara' (—)
Al Shara' pharmacy 985238

ZARQA:
Dr. Suleiman Abu Adileh 983040
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Civil Defence Directorate 661111
Civil Defence Emergency 630341
Rescue Police 92, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 198, 891228
Blood Bank 778303
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 639141
Public Security Directorate 656000 / 685111
Water Authority 660100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Price Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage

Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality

Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 12
Overseas Calls 17

Central Amman Telephone

Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 771111
Radio Jordan 771111
Water Authority 660100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power
Company 648411, 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-52000

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khaldi Maternity, J. Amn. 644281/6
Al-Khaldi Maternity, J. Amn. 644281/6
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 664171/4

Shmeisani Hospital 669131

University Hospital 845845
Al-Mushtari Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic Hospital 666127/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 77101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26
Amy, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 662240/50
Amal Hospital 674155

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)991071
Jbn Sina Hospital (09)986732

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272775
Jbn Al Nafes Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

MARKET PRICES
Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple 450 / 350
Banana 350 / 300
Banana (Mukammal) 300 / 250
Beans 420 / 350
Broad beans 750 / 650
Cabbage 120 / 80
Carrots 160 / 120
Cauliflower 170 / 120
Cucumbers 360 / 300
Dates 500 / 450
Eggplant (large) 90 / 60
Eggplant (small) 160 / 120
Garlic 300 / 200
Grapefruit 160 / 120
Lemon 200 / 150
Marrow (large) 120 / 80
Marrow (small) 210 / 160
Orange (French) 350 / 300
Orange (Shamoudi) 230 / 180
Orange (local) 340 / 300
Onion (dry) 200 / 160
Pepper (hot) 270 / 200
Pepper (sweet) 270 / 200
Potato 270 / 220
Spinach 120 / 80
Tomatoes 280 / 220

Queen Noor attends graduation of new batch of policewomen

AMMAN (Petra, J.T.) — A group of 45 policewomen graduated here Monday at a ceremony attended by Her Majesty Queen Noor after completing a training course in police work, administrative tasks and other skills associated with policewomen's work at different departments.

The Queen watched the graduates parade and carry out a performance of their different skills, such as the use of weapons, storming buildings and freeing hostages and other skills.

She distributed diplomas to the graduates and awards to those excelling in their courses.

The graduates have undergone training in martial arts such as judo and karate, fencing, physical fitness and sports. They also received military training and theoretical lectures on Jordanian laws and police work, according to Major Hussein Shahin, commander of the Jordanian Women Police Force.

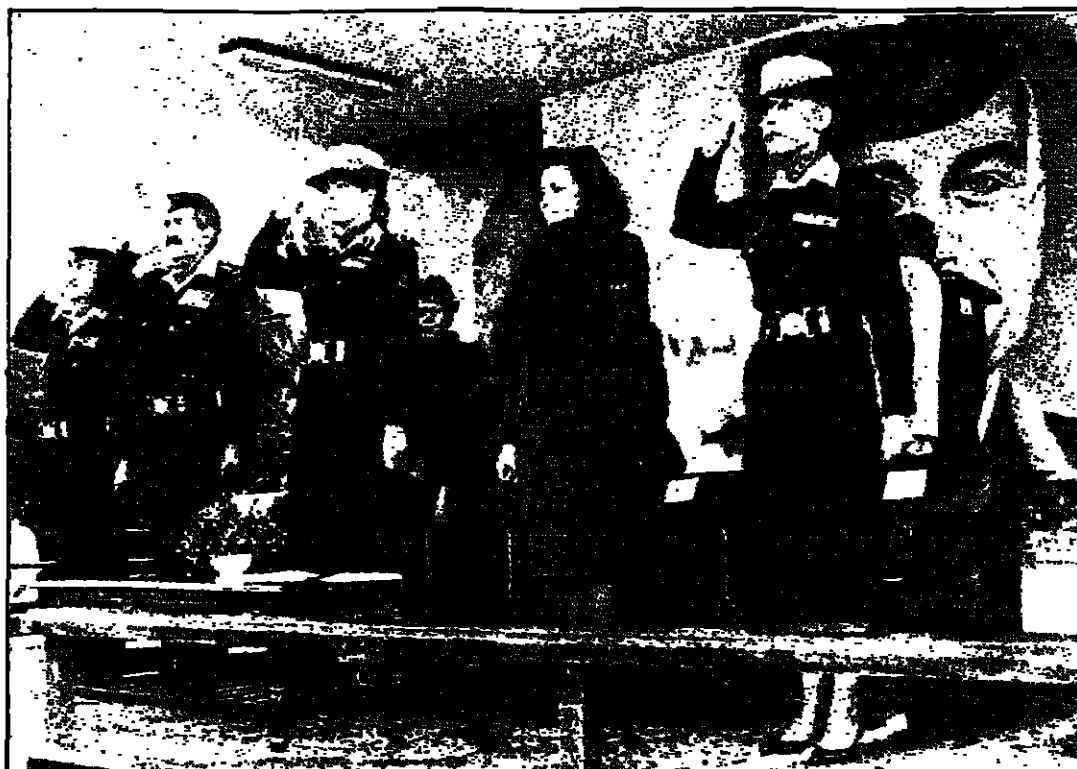
She said that the new batch of policewomen will take up their posts alongside men and women who have pledged to ensure further security and stability for their country.

Public Security Department (PSD) Director General Abdul Hadi Al Majali and senior police officers were present at the graduation ceremony.

Before the ceremony the Queen called at the PSD Headquarters and was briefed on the process of improvements and modernisation which is going on at all PSD-affiliated centres.

Queen Noor toured different departments and was briefed by police officers on their functions and duties.

The graduates will be employed to carry out traffic duties, or will be stationed at various departments including the PSD offices, airports and border posts.



Her Majesty Queen Noor Monday attends the graduation of a new batch of policewomen in Amman.

Prince Hassan calls for council to coordinate health services



HRH Crown Prince Hassan

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Monday called for developing the health system with its preventive and curative branches and for creating an intermediate council for coordinating and integrating efforts of all the parties concerned with health.

At a meeting attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister Thouqan Hindawi, ministers of Health and Planning, presidents of the Jordan universities and secretaries general of the Higher Council of Science and Technology and the ministries of

Planning, Education and Higher Education, Prince Hassan stressed the need for coordinating efforts in the field of social services through the establishment of a special council comprising the secretaries general of the ministries concerned.

Such a council is needed for uniting the decision making body and for speeding up the implementation of the recommendations of various development seminars.

Prince Hassan also called for channelling a specific concept for creating a general secretariat to be in charge of coordinating economic activities of the private sector. The Crown Prince called on the Jordanian universities to lay the foundations for dialogue on contemporary issues among the university students and for setting up a centre to assist the secondary stage students in selecting the right disciplines.

4 Arab countries discuss air transport federation

BAGHDAD (Petra) — Contact are currently underway between representatives of the national air carriers in Jordan, Iraq, Egypt and Kuwait to form an Arab Federation for Air Transport and Shipping, Director of the Iraqi Airways Nouredine Safi Hamad said Monday.

Hamad added that representatives for the Royal Jordanian, Iraqi Airways, Egypt Air, and Kuwait Airline will meet later this month in Baghdad to discuss the proposed federation, which the four countries will serve as its nucleus.

However, Hamad noted, membership in the federation will be open to all Arab countries.

Once established, the flights between the contracting countries will be considered as internal flights and as such the flight rates will be lower than the current flight rates, because it will allow each company to perform a specialised task, thus contributing to saving hard currency. The proposed federation will open up new scopes for Arab airline companies to fly to various world destinations.

Jordan air fares rise

AMMAN (R) — Jordan has increased the price of airline tickets bought in the country by 28 per cent to offset the adjustment in the value of the Jordanian dinar and to deter speculators, an official said Monday.

The increase, ordered by the Civil Aviation Authority, is effective from Jan. 1 and will apply to Royal Jordanian and foreign airlines, he said.

Ghassan Ali, Royal Jordanian vice-president for sales and marketing, said people from outside Jordan had been buying tickets at a 40 per cent discount compared with international prices.

"The aim is to absorb the difference in the exchange value

of the dinar and to adjust the imbalance in fares which had led to many passengers from outside Jordan buying tickets here for 40 per cent less than corresponding fares elsewhere," Ali said.

Ali said the increase would depress sales of tickets for leisure trips but would not affect business or official travel.

Royal Jordanian Chairman Ali Ghandour has said increased ticket sales abroad should compensate for any local decline.

Last month he forecast that the airline would carry 1.5 million passengers in '89, 200,000 more than last year, and make a net profit of JD 1.6 million (\$3.4 million), compared to JD 1.9 million (\$4.0 million) in 1988.

JVA approves plan for housing units

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) board Monday approved plans for housing units in the Jordan Valley region and said that more than 1,000 land units will be distributed for housing to local inhabitants who had earlier applied for them.

The meeting, which was chaired by Minister of Water and Irrigation Ahmad Dakhan, said that 1,038 units of land will be distributed as follows: 381 units for Thahr Al Ramel district, 297 units for Al Rabie district, 70 units for Dirar and 280 plots for Al Balawneh district.

The board also decided on a set of measures for the distribution of housing units to the Jordan Valley inhabitants.

These beneficiaries will be the farmers actually involved in agricultural work and living on their own lands, those of them who work there but do not live in the valley though they own pieces of land there, as well as those farmers who do not own any land and do not live there.

These were grouped into six different categories according to the statement following the meeting.

It said that farmers in the first, second, fourth and fifth categories can buy land at JD 200 a unit, while JD 125 will be paid for

every unit for those in third category and JD 250 for those in sixth category.

The statement made it clear that each of the units must be 288 square metres in area but additional areas can be sold to the farmers at the rate of 800 fils per square metre.

The board said beneficiaries have three months to pay for their plots of land otherwise they will be given to others according to the statement.

New regulations issued for transit vehicles

AMMAN (Petra) — The Customs Department has issued new regulations for all types of vehicles and means of transport passing through Jordanian territory in transit, and said they were designed to facilitate the vehicles' passage and avoid stopping for inspection.

According to the new rules all covered vehicles should be qualified to carry goods overland, should allow for official seals to be easily affixed on them, should not have concealed cavities where anything can be concealed, there should be a partition between the driver's compartment and the goods compartment and: that

arrangements should be made so that none of the sealed goods can be taken out or anything added to them on the way.

The new regulations stipulate that the cover over the transported commodities should be in good condition, not torn in any part, it should be made of strong linen or cloth covered with plastic and sufficient for the whole load.

The regulations stipulated that all parts of the containers carrying the goods be fixed and immovable and that the doors should firmly shut and allow for a customs seal to be placed easily on them.

Hindwai inspects Tawjihi exam halls in Tafileh

TAFILEH (Petra, J.T.) — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Thouqan Hindawi Monday visited Tafileh district in southern Jordan and inspected examination halls where Tawjihi students are currently taking an examination session set by the Ministry of Education for the 1988-1989 school year.

The minister met with students and enquired from them about the standard of questions and the general conditions surrounding the examination halls.

The minister enquired in particular about the English language, mathematics and physics examinations which the students have already sat for in the light of comments published in the Arabic daily newspapers. Columnists in these dailies have been voicing complaints by students about the difficult sets of questions especially in physics given to the Tawjihi students in the current examination session.

Replies to such complaints from ministry officials gave assurances that all questions for the examination were within the required subjects and textbooks assigned for the students.

During his tours, the minister said he wanted to make sure that the examinations were going on according to plan, to hear the complaints and remarks directly from the students themselves and to listen to the comments on the general circumstances and conditions at the examination halls.

At the end of the tour Hindawi met with the Tafileh governor and heard demands and requests

about improving the general educational conditions in the Tafileh area, the school buildings needed there; and those which will be built in implementation of the national educational conference resolutions of last year.

Hindawi was accompanied on the tour by the director of examinations and other officials from the Ministry of Education.

A total of 58,618 male and female students are taking the current session of the Tawjihi examinations which ends on Jan. 9, 1989.

There will be another session for the Tawjihi students in June, and the final results will be expected a month later, will before the universities begin the autumn semester.

The Ministry of Education, which organised the examinations, has made available a total of 768 halls in different governorates of which 254 are located in the Amman region.



Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister Thouqan Hindawi Monday taking Tawjihi examinations in Tafileh Monday (Petra photo)

6,598 people killed, 103,780 injured in 177,128 road accidents since 1970

AMMAN (Petra) — The total number of road accidents in Jordan from 1970 until the end 1987 stood at 177,128 which resulted in the death of 6,598 people and the injury of 103,780 according to Colonel Husni Ala'uddin, the director of the Traffic Department.

He said 1985 claimed the highest figure of casualties — 524 killed and 9,100 injured — from road accidents in the Kingdom. Ala'uddin noted in a seminar organised by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, recently.

The seminar was organised in view of a government decision to enforce the use of seat belts in all vehicles as of this month.

The use of seat belts while travelling by car can be instrumental in saving lives of many people. A survey conducted in Britain recently showed that seat belts reduced injuries for front seat passengers by 26 per cent and reduced death rates by 23 per cent, Ala'uddin noted.

He said that Australia was the first country to impose a law on the use of seat belts in 1972 followed by New Zealand and the practice has been applied in all European countries, the United States and Canada since then.

In Jordan he said a law was passed in 1983 enforcing the use of seat belts but there were amendments to the law in 1985 and 1987.

Ala'uddin said that the human element is the most important and human rights were proved in the past to be responsible for most of the road accidents, either through carelessness or through neglect to check their cars to ensure that they were fit for the road.

Health Minister Zuhair

Malhas, who served as president of the Jordan Society for the Prevention of Road Accidents, said that prevention is always better than cure and the seat belts can save a lot of people from danger. They can also save efforts and cost of dealing with injuries that might result from accidents on the road.

Malhas denied that seat belts can have any adverse effects on pregnant women and said that the seat belts had been proven to give 100 per cent protection for children.

On the whole, he said, seat belts are sure to protect passengers from head and neck injuries which more often than not lead to unconsciousness.

Malhas demanded that campaigns to spread awareness among the public, especially children, should be launched and fines should be imposed on those who violate the law.



Scenes from road accidents in Jordan in the recent past (file photos)

Karak to celebrate Arbor Day on Jan. 8

KARAK (Petra) — Karak Governorate will celebrate Arbor Day on Jan. 8, according to a decision taken by a meeting chaired by Karak Governor Mohammad Shobaki.

He said that 20,000 forest and fruit tree saplings will be planted at the newly created handicraft zone near Karak, as well as around schools and in public places in Karak, Qaser, Mazar and other areas of the governorate.

The Agriculture Department director here said that a plan has been laid down for greening all parts of the Karak Governorate. Naour district is also celebrating Arbor Day along with other towns in the country. The district governor said tree-planting ceremonies will be held Jan. 20.

Arbor Day falls Jan. 15 this year when official tree-planting ceremonies normally are held in Amman and in its suburbs.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ An art exhibition by Friends of Plastic Art in Gulf countries at the National Gallery.
- ★ An exhibition of works by Contemporary Arab Artists at Al Wasiti Art Gallery.
- ★ An exhibition of paintings by Jordanian artist Farouk Lambaz at Alia Art Gallery — 5:30 p.m.
- ★ The Jordanian plastic art exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ The Iraqi Cultural Week which includes an exhibition by the Iraqi artist Salam Al Madamghah and an exhibition of children's paintings and children's literary and cultural books, at the Royal Cultural Centre.

BAZAAR

- ★ A charity bazaar that includes wooden handicrafts, embroideries, artificial flowers, children's toys and cultural books at Ala'a Centre, Bittin Refugee Camp.

FILM

- ★ A scientific film on the mechanism and functions of the brain at the American Centre — 7:00 p.m.

جورين تابعن يومه هريمه سحابة مستقلة تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الارمنية

DR. WALEED M. SADI

Facsimile: 661242

...and the

Gallup poll will test Soviets' knowledge of geography

By Anne Imse
The Associated Press

MOSCOW — The Soviet Union, which for decades banned accurate maps as a security risk and opinion polls as anti-communist, will allow a U.S. polling firm to survey citizens' knowledge of geography.

The Gallup poll of 1,500 to 2,000 people apparently is aimed at discovering whether Soviet citizens are as wholly ignorant as citizens of other industrialised countries of such basic facts as the location of Great Britain.

A recent international poll by Gallup and the Washington-based National Geographic Society showed that Swedes appeared to be the best educated among eight industrialised countries when it comes to maps and globes.

Adult Swedes answered 11.6 questions correct out of 16. West Germans answered 11.2 correctly, Japanese 9.7, French 9.3 and Canadians 9.2. Americans scored

8.6, Italians 7.6 and Mexicans 7.4.

The poll found, among other things, that three out of four Americans couldn't find the Persian Gulf on a map and most were even lost on Britain.

Now it appears that the same test is coming to the Soviet Union. The government newspaper Izvestia said the planned poll is a joint project of Gallup and the National Geographic Society aimed at determining the level of geographic knowledge of various countries.

Opinions

Although the Soviets have broken with tradition and started their own public opinion polls in the past year, this apparently is the first time a foreign firm will be permitted to conduct a survey on Soviet soil, albeit in conjunction with the Soviet's institute for sociological research.

For many years, sociology was a lost science in the Soviet Union, with Marxist-Leninism claiming the subject was irrelevant because all societies inevitably will develop into communism.

Publicly distributed maps still are sketchy and deliberately distorted, with rivers shifted and whole sections of major cities excised. The Soviet government admitted to that practice several months ago and promised that new, accurate maps were forthcoming. Many Soviet citizens have difficulty reading maps as a result of these inaccuracies.

Reliance on public transportation also limits some citizens' sense of direction.

"Follow bus number 7," may be the best advice a motorist can expect.

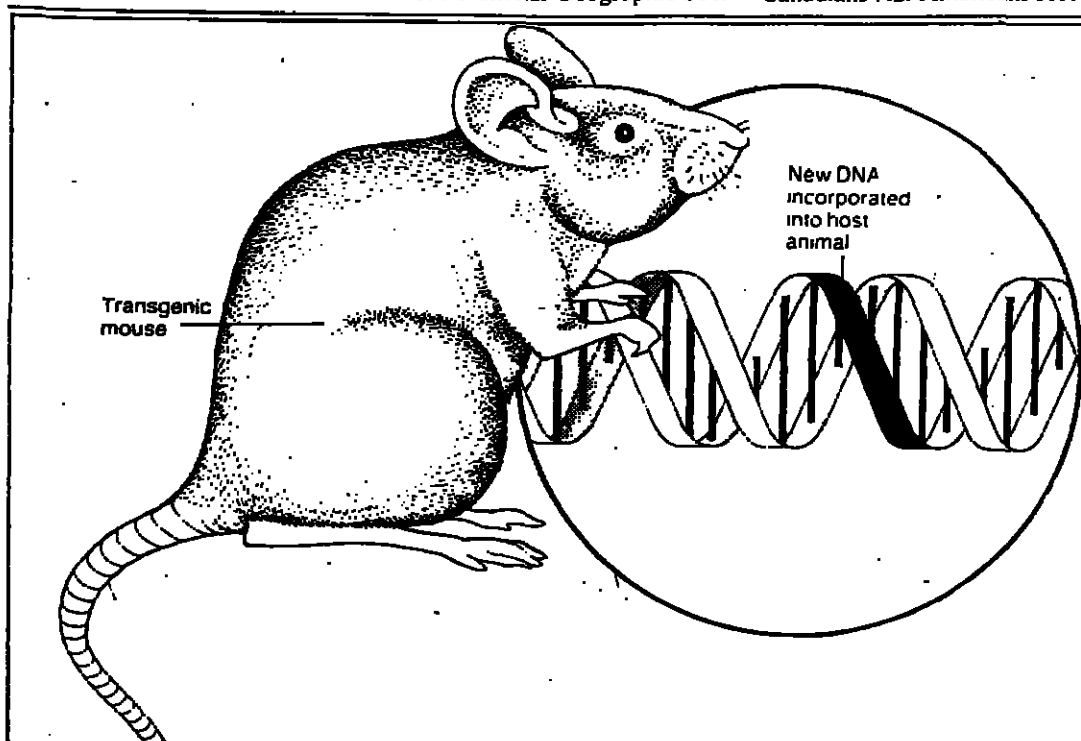
The Gallup poll also will survey Soviet consumers to determine what products they buy and what items they would like to purchase, Izvestia said.

That basic marketing question may sound a bit strange to Soviet ears. With a chronic severe shortage of nearly all consumer items, most Soviet consumers buy anything decent they find, regardless of such niceties as size, and then trade with friends.

The Gallup poll also will question Soviet consumers' familiarity with American-made products, Izvestia said.

Soviets love Western brand names and snap up shirts, stickers, hats, almost anything imprinted with names like Adidas, Nike and Mercedes. But the genuine Western products are hard to come by, as the Soviet Union has cut imports of consumer goods as its foreign income has fallen with the price of Siberian oil and gas.

Exact wording of the Gallup survey questions is still being worked out, but it should be completed by mid-January, Izvestia said.



Gene-altered animals enter the marketplace

By Harold M. Schmeck Jr.
New York Times Service

THE mice, light brown females of a common laboratory variety, look ordinary. But they carry a trait that sets them apart from all other mice: They produce milk that contains a human blood substance valuable in treating heart attacks.

These mice are among hundreds of varieties of rodents and other animals developed in recent years that are called transgenic because they possess foreign genes, often from humans. Over several years, the transplantation of genes from one species to another has moved from a laboratory tour de force to a scientific and industrial tool with potentially vast implications.

Scientists are using transgenic animals as a versatile and powerful resource for a wide variety of studies. Industrialists hope to use transgenic animals to produce valuable drugs and other substances. Agricultural specialists hope to produce improved livestock.

A wide range of transgenic animals has already been produced.

By recent conservative counts, there may be more than a thousand strains of transgenic mice, more than 12 varieties of transgenic pigs, several breeds of rabbits and fish, at least two breeds of rats and at least one transgenic cow with another still under development.

Only a small proportion of attempts to transplant genes are successful, a problem that hardly slows research in mice because they breed rapidly and are inexpensive, but has hampered the production of transgenics in larger species.

Many scientists see great promise in the research and its applications, but the work has also generated controversy. Some environmentalists, farmers and animal rights activists object to production of transgenic animals on any of several grounds: that use of the animals could upset agricultural economics, driving small farmers out of business; that some of the animals could upset the balance of nature, and that the practice may cause suffering in animals. Some people simply oppose genetic tinkering philosophically.

The mice that produce milk

with a slightly human tinge make tissue plasminogen activator (TPA), a human substance that dissolves blood clots. Production in the milk is believed to cause the mice no harm and makes the substance easy to harvest. Produced by other methods of genetic engineering at high cost, the substance has saved the lives of many heart attack patients.

The mice that produce TPA in their milk were developed in a collaboration between scientists at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, and Integrated Genetics, a biotechnology company in Framingham, Massachusetts. Together with Tufts University's school of veterinary medicine, the company is now in the final stage of research to produce goats that can make TPA efficiently.

Katherine Gordon, a leader of the research at Integrated Genetics, said the company hopes to have goats producing the substance in their milk next year. She estimated that a herd of 100 to 200 goats could produce enough TPA every year to supply the nation's entire demand at a far lower cost than by other methods — International Herald Tribune.



Paloma Picasso, an artist in her own right

By Colin McDowell

PABLO PICASSO was no slouch when it came to getting his own way and neither is his daughter. Even when she was young, although she claims she was terribly shy, she was quite the little madam.

She recalls how she insisted on wearing scarlet lipstick and painting her nails for her first day at school. She always liked to do things Paloma's way.

She is still doing things Paloma's way but on a global scale now. Internationally successful figures travel endlessly and Paloma Picasso is right up there in the big league, clocking up an enormous number of air miles each year.

When I met her in London she had just flown in from Milan, was off to Paris the next day, on to New York and then back to Europe the following week. But she has energy enough to cope — and then some more. It is fuelled by a belief in the work ethic and an "iron" determination to make her own mark.

Worker

"My father was a worker," she explains. "When he died and we started going through everything we just could not believe it. There was so much. We kept wondering how one man could do it all."

Although, I do remember noticing, even when I was young, how quick he was. His concentration level was phenomenal. He was totally unaware of everything

around him when he was working. I remember how, after lunch he would start drawing again before we had even cleared the plates into the kitchen and within seconds he would be completely absorbed in what he was doing.

Paloma Picasso does not pretend to have that degree of concentration but she hotly denies any hints that she is a dilettante designer cashing in on big daddy's name. "When I first started designing jewellery for Tiffany, I was very shocked when I learned that people were going around New York saying that I had only put my name to the range. I went mad. I said: 'This is a horrible country. What is wrong with these people? How dare they?'"

And then I thought: "This is very silly, the people who know me know the truth so forget it." In fact, she follows anything she designs right through from drawing board to launching party. "Doing a nice drawing is not enough. You have to go to the factory and work with the artists. That is when you learn. It is vital to be there watching every step. And it is good when designs have to be changed and adapted. Surmounting unexpected problems forces your creativity. Things you can do naturally are not difficult. It is the problems that force you to do better than you thought you could."

As a designer, she is taken more seriously with each new project. She is careful to define what she does: "I never call it art," she says, "because it is not."

In any case, I steer away from art for obvious reasons. I like playing with design elements but I am a very practical person and I hate things where the design becomes more important than the function. All those kettles they do in Milan actually get in the way when you want to make cup of tea."

Venture

Her latest venture, china and crystal designed for the German firm of Villeroy and Boch, is restrained and classical. Paloma Picasso feels that it is essentially a practical, workmanlike range although anyone popping into Harrods for it might get a shock. The soup tureen from Castellan decorated in red and black, her favourite colours, will knock you back £227.95. Practical it may be: everyday it is not.

Although she is one of the world's most fashionable women, Paloma Picasso has no interest in designing clothes. She finds them too ephemeral and prefers to design the accessories of fashion.

Her jewellery range for Tiffany made the fashion world sit up but it was her perfume, Paloma, which put her on the map. At £45 for 7.5 milligrams it is not exactly a give-away and yet, Paloma is pleased to say, its sales have forced the perfume world to do a rethink.

Paloma Picasso and her husband, Rafael Lopez Sanchez, took a risk when they launched it. No one thought that it could succeed without the glamour of a major fashion-house behind it.

Mr. and Mrs. Sanchez were determined to prove them wrong. They succeeded by giving the scent more aggressive marketing and publicity than anything else on the market. It was the first to be packaged in red and black. "Too strong," the pundits said, "Women like pale colours on their dressing table." At her last count, Paloma Picasso found seven perfumes packaged in red and black but, as she proudly says: "We were the first."

They broke the mould of designer-perfumes by building a campaign on Paloma's name and personality. Catherine Deneuve and Elizabeth Taylor have followed eagerly but it was "Paloma" which first hit the jackpot.

As Paloma Picasso explains: "The publicity photograph of me was very forceful and uncompromising. It could only have been me and that is what we capitalised on."

"What we were saying was: 'It is this person's perfume and nobody else's. You cannot escape it.' It is fun to be first; we took the risk and we were right."

Clothes are very important to Paloma Picasso and she has been considered one of the world's best-dressed women for many years.

She finds that she has less and less time to spend on choosing and increasingly limits her purchases to her two favourite designers, Yves Saint Laurent and Azzedine Alaïa. "I dress in an extreme way, with the red lips

and my hair," she explains, "so I like the strength of their clothes. I might add something from Geoffrey Beene or Bill Blass. They (the designers) hate it when I mix but I do not like dressing from head to toe in one designer's look."

Although she is very rich she does not normally buy couture. It is a problem of time once again. She can only spend a couple of afternoons each season choosing from the ready-to-wear.

As she says: "You do not have to wear couture to look good. When I was first chosen for the Best Dressed list it was spending nothing and buying most of my things in the Portobello Road."

Paloma Picasso's life changed when she inherited so much money on her father's death, but she insists that she remained the same. "All right," she admits, "I went from two-star to five-star hotels but if you choose the right one, in the right location, a two-star hotel can be fine. It is not necessary to be rich to live well — although, if you have less money, then you do need more time to arrange the Good Life."

When you are as rich as Paloma Picasso, you tend to take it all for granted but when I asked her if her New York apartment was full of Picassos she replied simply: "Yes, thank God, and they make me feel very humble."

We talked of Arianna Stassinopoulou Huffington's book about Picasso and Paloma admitted that it was not her favourite: "I am rather upset but I cannot do anything about it. People are allowed to write what they want but it is so onerous that it is boring. I couldn't finish it. I tried to consult me. She asked my help and I was very nervous. I imagine my irritability when I read a headline. Paloma Picasso gives green light on biography," I thought: "This goes a little far. I'm going to say away from her; she is too posy by half."

Memories

Her memories of her father are far removed from the monster created by Ms Huffington: "He was a very good father as far as I was concerned. He didn't bother about school and things like that but he did care about making you imaginative. He was so alive, he was endlessly exciting. I used to sit for hours watching him paint. He never attempted to teach me. He knew that painting could not be taught. When I used to draw he never gave an opinion because he knew that you have to become your own critic."

Living with the most famous surname in the world has advantages and disadvantages and Paloma Picasso has learned to cope with both. She now feels that she is finally moving away from the "daughter of Picasso" syndrome: "I am coming out of the shadow. For years people were interested in me only because of him. To overcome this I have had to be very strong." If you don't believe her, look at that jawline. — Arab Times.

Women and smoking

DOCTORS give warnings and the effects of smoking on the heart and lungs, as well as the risks of cancer it could cause, are well known. But, with women, smoking can have serious consequences on their reproductive functions and on the lives of their babies. It takes women who smoke three or four times longer to become pregnant than women who do not smoke.

A few weeks ago at the Aquitaine Updating Symposium on Human Reproduction held in Bordeaux in the south-west of France, Dr. Jean Cohen, a gynaecologist and obstetrician in Paris, presented an overview of the different studies revealing the risks of sterility in women who smoke. All the studies presented the same results.

The study with the most striking conclusions was carried out in England on 17,000 women. It reveals that after trying for five years, 11% of women who smoke are still not pregnant," says Dr. Cohen.

"I had a heavy-smoking patient who had been trying to get pregnant for five years. We had done all the sterility tests and, apparently, everything functioned normally. One day, I said to her 'I promise you will have a baby as soon as you stop smoking.' So she stopped smoking and about three months later she was pregnant," says Dr. Cohen.

Sterility caused by smoking is thus not irreversible, but in what way does smoking have an influence on the fertility of women? According to Dr. Cohen, "It is known that smoking has an effect, but it is not yet known precisely in what way." It was a Japanese doctor, Professor Yoshinaga who demonstrated the mechanism, after making rats inhale tobacco smoke. He noted that the number of eggs contained in the ovaries fell proportionally to the amount of tobacco smoke inhaled. That is to say that smoking attacks and destroys the oocytes. He also noted that



Cigarettes are particularly dangerous for women!

the amount of progesterone, which is the hormone needed for the implantation of the fertilised ovum, fell in the same proportion, with the inhalation of tobacco smoke. This results in the egg's being unable to embed itself correctly in the wall of the uterus.

Fallopian connection

It is also thought that smoking has an effect on the Fallopian tubes which carry the fertilised ovum to the uterus. Smoking appears to weaken the contractions of the Fallopian tubes thereby preventing the embryo from travelling to the uterus. The embryo thus becomes blocked in the Fallopian tube in which it grows, leading to an extra-uterine pregnancy.

A study by the World Health Organisation confirms these hypotheses, as there are three times as many extra-uterine pregnancies in women who smoke than in those who do not.

The different studies carried out on the damage caused by smoking confirm one another and

today, doctors, despairing at the pathological consequences they are faced with, do not hesitate to speak of smoking in general, and particularly in women, as "defying common sense." Indeed, the World Health Organisation speaks of the "extension of smoking in women over the last three decades."

Nadine Gautier
L'actualite en France

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U.N. body sees further drop in living standards in Africa

ADDIS ABABA (R) — Africa's economic growth rate nearly doubled last year but Africans grew poorer, a trend that is likely to continue in 1989, the U.N. Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) said Monday.

The continent's gross domestic product — the total value of all the goods and services it produces — rose by an estimated 2.5 per cent in 1988, up from 1.3 per cent in 1987.

That expansion lagged behind the 1988 population increase of three per cent and economic growth of a further 2.5 per cent in 1989 would also trail the population rise, the commission said in its annual review of the African economy.

That meant the decade-old trend of declining living standards would continue in 1989.

"Even this cheerless forecast may turn out to be rather optimistic if the main underlying assumption with respect to (favourable) weather conditions were to turn out to be misplaced," said Adebayo Adedji, ECA executive secretary.

He said that with weak prices for its commodity exports, Africa had been unable to get out of a trap of spending more than it

earned to repay its debt and buy imports — a pattern leaving little money for investment to boost economic growth.

"The cumulative impact of persistent economic crisis in Africa during this decade in the face of high population growth rates has been a sustained deceleration in the standard and conditions of living of the average African," he noted.

He added: "Today, his or her per capita income is only about 80 per cent of what it was at the beginning of the decade."

Adedji said Africa's external debt rose to \$230 billion at the end of the year from \$218 billion at the end of 1987 while prices for its main exports slumped, meaning less foreign exchange was available to repay that debt.

The commission estimated that Africa's exports fell two per cent in 1988 to \$50.3 billion from \$51.4 billion in 1987. Imports were little changed at \$60.4 billion.

"An increasing number of

countries are merely accumulating arrears... most of the existing debt rescheduling formulae have had the effect of merely deferring the debt service problem into an uncertain future," Adedji said.

He criticised International Monetary Fund and World Bank loan and reform programmes for indebted countries, saying they paid little attention to the need for African nations to diversify exports and become more self-sufficient.

"The transition from preoccupation with financial adjustment and deflationary budget controls to growth-oriented adjustment is nowhere near in sight for Africa," he said.

"While African countries have taken considerable political risks in embarking on socially painful adjustment programmes and policies, the expected inflow of new capital to sustain the adjustment and recovery process has, more often than not, not materialised," he emphasised.

The commission said Africa's food and agricultural output rose by 3.8 per cent in 1988 and should increase by about four per cent in 1989 if the weather remained favourable.

It said cereal production rose

an estimated 7.8 per cent in 1988 to 71.8 million tonnes, with record harvests in Morocco, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Prospects for root crops, staples in much of tropical Africa, were not bright because of drought and mealy bug infestation.

Meanwhile, international prices for African products were likely to remain depressed.

"The world market is likely to be characterised by falling prices in real terms, and oversupply for most commodities, minerals and non-minerals alike, with the external demand remaining weak and sluggish in the face of the projected decline in the industrial economies in 1989," Adedji said.

The commission said stagnant demand for coffee and cocoa would continue to squeeze the economies of such countries as the Ivory Coast, Ghana and Uganda.

Weak oil prices would affect Nigeria and other producers, while recent gains in copper prices would have a limited effect because producers such as Zaire and Zambia had supply problems, with their production falling an estimated 15 per cent in 1988.

ECONOMIC NEWS BRIEFS

Egypt hikes Suez Canal charges

CAIRO (R) — Ships using the Suez Canal in 1989 have to pay between four and 12.5 per cent more in transit tolls. Canal Authority Chairman Ezzat Adel has said. The increase, the first since 1987, took effect Jan. 1. Egypt's Middle East News Agency (MENA) quoted him as saying in the Suez Canal city of Ismailia. He said the rise would bring in \$96 million in extra revenue. He put earnings in 1988 at a record \$1.27 billion. In October, Adel said the tolls would be hiked up to eight per cent.

Minox goes into receivership

GIessen, West Germany (AP) — Minox, a well-known maker of small cameras, has gone into receivership in an attempt to put the ailing firm back on its feet after cutting 200 employees, the court-appointed official administering the move has said. Wilhelm Schaaf, who is overseeing the receivership, also said the remaining 335 employees had received new month-long contracts which he hopes to be able to extend. Minox, located in Giessen about 60 kilometres north of Frankfurt, has filed for bankruptcy and claims 45 million marks (\$25.7 million) in debt. Schaaf, in a telephone interview with the Associated Press, said he hoped to make the company "economically manageable" within the next year, "then I hope I can find someone else to take it over."

Mexico begins daily devaluation of peso

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The first day of 1989 brought a controlled downward slide in the value of the peso. The devaluation is part of an inflation-fighting programme that kept the currency steady throughout 1988. The daily devaluation of one peso to U.S. dollar that began Sunday is scheduled to last through the end of July. On Dec. 23, the last banking day of 1988, a dollar was worth 2,230 pesos. On July 31, a dollar will buy 2,472 pesos, the government news agency Notimex has said. President Carlos Salinas De Gortari has said the controlled devaluation is designed to give investors a better return on pesos than foreign currencies. Salinas announced the devaluation and other modifications in the inflation-fighting programme in mid-December, shortly after taking office. He also announced an eight per cent rise in the minimum wage, which had remained the same for nine months. The year-old economic programme, which froze the currency exchange rate, wages and many prices, is credited with more than halving the record inflation of 159 per cent that Mexico suffered in 1987.

UAE to expand share trading in March

ABU DHABI (R) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) will open its share market to citizens of other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states from March 1, a UAE minister was quoted as saying. State minister for financial and industrial affairs Ahmad Al Tayar told the Emirates News Agency WAM that the move followed wide-ranging economic agreements at last year's GCC summit in Bahrain. "GCC citizens will be allowed to set up, own and transfer the ownership of shares in the UAE," Tayar said. The six-nation GCC lists Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman and the UAE.

Zaireans push to punish Belgium

KINSHASA, Zaire (AP) — Parliamentarians in this Central African state have called for the suspension of debt repayments to Belgium, the former colonial power, and suspension or breaking of relations. Members also urged the government to renounce the 28-year-old cooperation treaty with Brussels, alleging that Zaire, formerly the Belgian Congo, had been the victim of the agreement, while Belgium had profited disproportionately. The debate called for the reevaluation of all agreements signed with Belgium and the submission of contentious matters to the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

Test finds economic illiteracy rampant among U.S. students

NEW YORK (AP) — A survey found that only one-third of America's high school students were able to define simple concepts such as inflation or profits, suggesting that economic illiteracy is rampant among the young.

Results of the survey, involving 8,205 11th and 12th-grade students (those about ages 15 to 18) in public and private high schools in 33 states, were released last week at a news conference featuring Paul Volcker, chairman of the Federal Reserve Board from 1979 to 1987. The government agency sets U.S. monetary policy.

The survey found only 34 per cent able to correctly define profits on a multiple-choice exam as "revenues minus costs."

And just 39 per cent selected the correct definition of gross national product: "The market value of the nation's output of

final goods and services."

The news is "not good if you believe that a basic understanding of our economic system is important if this country is indeed to be effective in what everyone realises is a period of global competition," Volcker said in a statement.

Students across the country took a 40-minute, 46-question multiple choice "test of economic literacy" in May 1988, said William Walstad, a University of Nebraska-Lincoln economics professor who developed the exam with John Soper, an economics professor at John Carroll University in Cleveland.

On average, students correctly answered only about 40 per cent of the test items but were even weaker on simple questions pertaining to inflation, the effects of tariffs on trade, and the impact of

investment on economic growth, Walstad said in a telephone interview.

The survey was sponsored by the New York-based Joint Council on Economic Education, a non-profit, nationwide coalition aimed at promoting economics instruction from kindergarten through high school.

The exam was the first to document the apparent economic illiteracy of a majority of U.S. high school students. Economics thus joins a growing list of subject areas including writing skills, geography, foreign language, science and math where recent tests have shown U.S. students achieving at dismal levels.

Japan requires all high school students to take at least a semester of economics, Walstad said. But only 28 of the 50 U.S. states require economics in the curricu-

lum in some form, and just 15 mandate economics as a graduation requirement.

"All too often economics is simply left out of the list of required subjects in recent calls for educational reform," Walstad said.

Compounding the problem, few classroom teachers are equipped to teach it.

"Teachers are the first to realise that they have inadequate background in the subject," Roxanne Bradshaw, secretary-treasurer of the National Education Association, told reporters.

Texas, for example, recently established a high school economics requirement, but only five per cent of secondary teachers in that state have ever taken an economics course, Bradshaw said.

Nigeria looks to small farmers, industrialists for non-oil wealth

LAGOS (R) — Nigeria, struggling to reduce its dependence on imports paid for with foreign exchange earnings from oil sales, has launched an austerity budget for 1989 which seeks to "channel scarce resources into agriculture and small scale industry."

Addressing the nation on radio and television, President Ibrahim Babangida said small farmers and manufacturers, using and producing local materials, were the centrepiece of the government's economic plan.

But economists said the stringent measures in a budget which had to cope with a burgeoning balance of payments deficit and huge foreign debts as well as mass unemployment and a surging cost of living would make the government's goals hard to achieve.

Babangida said nearly three years of structural adjustment had been extremely painful for individuals and groups used to opulence built on oil riches, but now that oil prices had crashed there could be no return to "the old profligate ways."

"This administration is determined to continue with the goal of diversification of the economy in 1989 so as to make us less dependent on the oil sector," he said.

Babangida said oil still accounted for at least 80 per cent of the country's foreign exchange earnings. Assuming a price of \$14 a barrel and production at 1.355 million barrels a day, oil would contribute \$4.22 billion to revenue in the coming year, with

other government earnings adding \$1.14 billion and private sector exports bringing in \$1.32 billion.

These figures compare with Nigerian earnings at the height of the oil boom of up to \$26 billion.

Nigerian economists said the government's measures, which included raising petrol prices by 43 per cent for private motorists, eliminating a range of fringe benefits for public employees, trimming spending by ministries and restricting money supply and credit growth would help to control the country's deficit.

But they doubted measures to encourage investment in agriculture and small scale manufacturing would make much headway in an atmosphere of economic stringency.

"This is a budget which puts on

the brakes," said a senior economist with a major Nigerian conglomerate.

"It cuts back on disposable income in both private and public sectors, tightens credit and allocates a massive and probably unsustainable proportion of funds to debt servicing," he said.

Babangida said the budget foresaw recurrent expenditure rising to 20.81 billion naira (\$3.93 billion) at the pre-budget official rate) from 15.71 billion naira (\$2.60 billion) in 1988, mainly because of an allocation of 8.82 billion (\$1.66 billion) for interest payments on external loans.

A further 4.21 billion naira (\$790 million) was earmarked for domestic loan interest and 1.2 billion (\$226 million) for public debt charges out of capital expenditure.

Soviet Union to ban wide range of exports

MOSCOW (AP) — The Soviet Union soon will ban the export of consumer goods ranging from caviar to children's shoes and will limit travellers to about \$140 worth of souvenirs, the official news agency TASS said Sunday.

The radical changes in export and customs regulations evidently are aimed at remedying an extreme shortage of consumer goods in the Soviet Union and assuaging citizens angry over the scarcity of such basic items as soap and windshield wipers.

TASS said the restrictions approved by the Council of Ministers will take effect Feb. 1 and last until the end of 1990. It did not give a date for the decision.

The brief announcement limiting exports of consumer goods to 100 rubles per person, or about \$140 at the current exchange rate, specifically included tourists. But it did not explain the effect of the ruling on the Soviet Union's attempts to earn scarce hard currency by selling the best caviar, fur hats and coats, vodka and souvenirs in stores that require dollars, pounds or other freely convertible money.

TASS said it will be forbidden to export televisions, refrigerators, freezers, washing and sewing machines, children's clothing and shoes, coffee and caviar.

Coffee is not grown in the Soviet Union, and the import duty is up to \$15 a pound.

The announcement also said customs duties will climb to a range of 20 per cent to 100 per cent of the retail price on vacuum cleaners, mixers, coffee-grinders, irons, radios, cameras, automobile parts and other items. It was not clear if this meant import or export duties.

Export limits were imposed recently in Czechoslovakia and several other East European countries after complaints that tourists from neighbouring socialist nations were stripping their stores bare of consumer goods.

The growing practice prompted a Soviet economist, Marina Pavlova-Silvanskaya, to warn in Soviet Culture Sunday of an impending "trade war" among socialist countries.

Many Russians travel to Eastern Europe on shopping trips, and Pavlova-Silvanskaya herself reminisced about trips to East Germany and Poland. She said her boss insisted that "the programme had to include a visit to some institution named for Lenin, lest the Germans go Poles think the citizens of the nation of the Great October revolution are coming to shop."

None of the socialist countries of Eastern Europe has fully convertible currencies, and they trade with each other based on exchange rates that often do not cover the exporting country's cost of production, much less a profit. Pavlova-Silvanskaya noted that capitalist countries don't find an invasion of shoppers a problem — in fact, just the reverse. On Nov. 7, a holiday in Hungary, 100,000 Hungarians went to Austria and spent \$42 million in hard currency, she wrote.

Rather than limit exports, the Austrians responded to the horde of shoppers with advertisements in Hungarian newspapers, inviting them back on their next day off. Pavlova-Silvanskaya noted.

Oil production

In another economic field, a London-based oil industry consultant has said that Soviet oil output slumped between July and September in 1988 casting doubt on whether last year's national oil production target could have been reached.

Petroleum Economics Ltd said in its quarterly bulletin "Soviet Energy Developments" that the reasons for the fall in the third quarter were unclear.

"It does seem that Soviet oil output fell by over 100,000 bar-

rels per day (b/d) during the third quarter, showing the first year-on-year decrease for about three years," it said.

In the 18 months to mid-1988, Soviet oil output had been running slightly above target.

"It is doubtful whether this year's (1988) target level of just under 12.6 million b/d can be achieved, unless output has rebounded during the fourth quarter," the bulletin said.

It said there has been reports that oil output from Siberia was hit by oilfield equipment shortages. It was also possible that ethnic unrest has affected output from the oil-producing area of Azerbaijan, it added.

Official Soviet oil production statistics have not been published since August. The August data showed a fall to some 12.3 million b/d, the lowest level since April

1986 and about 500,000 b/d below the May 1987 peak, the report said.

"Although there are indications that output recovered slightly in September to about 12.5 million b/d (the same as in June), it was still about two per cent below a year earlier. As a result the third quarter average was over one per cent lower than during the third quarter of 1987," the report said.

There have also been problems in other areas in the energy sector.

"There is no doubt that the installation of new electricity generating capacity has fallen well behind plan — it is now possible to identify up to 20,000 megawatts of nuclear capacity which has been shut down or cancelled" in the aftermath of the accident at the Chernobyl power station, the report said.

Flurry of bailouts stirs concern

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal regulators rescued 217 savings-and-loan institutions in 1988, leaving Congress and President-elect George Bush to figure out the best way to pay the \$38 billion bill.

Theoretically, the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, which regulates the industry, expects enough income over the next 30 years — up to \$50 billion — to cover the cost.

But analysts and many members of Congress say that despite Bush's vehement pledge not to raise taxes, taxpayers will have to foot the bill for the largest number of failures and rescues since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Savings-and-loans are distinct from commercial banks. They developed as depositor-owned institutions whose purposes were to

encourage saving and to make mortgage loans.

Their investment strategy once centred on the interest paid on mortgages, but deregulatory measures under President Ronald Reagan gave them the opportunity to pursue new strategies, and many institutions made ill-advised investments that led to insolvency.

"We still don't know the magnitude of the savings and loan crisis," Senate Republican leader Bob Dole said Sunday. The regulators have about 350 more insolvency cases to handle. And, as of last Sept. 30, another 150 savings institutions were sliding toward insolvency with capital levels below 1.5 per cent.

Estimates of the total cost of paying for the mess run as high as \$112 billion, a figure reported in December.

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AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Monday Jan. 2, 1989
Central Bank official rates

	Buy	Sell	French franc	78.5	78.9
U.S. dollar	476.0	478.0	Japanese yen (for 100)	380.9	383.8
Pound Sterling	889.3	893.6	Dutch guilder	238.1	239.3
Deutschemark	249.0	250.3	Swedish crown	77.7	78.1
Swiss franc	317.0	318.6	Italian lira (for 100)	36.4	36.6
			Belgian franc (for 10)	127.9	128.5

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New Sri Lankan government sworn in amid continued strife

KANDY (Agencies) — Prime Minister Ranasinghe Premadasa, vowing to restore peace and eliminate poverty from Sri Lanka, was installed Monday as the island's new president in this sacred Buddhist city.

Tens of thousands of people chanted "Sadhu, Sadhu" as Premadasa, 64, was sworn in by the chief justice Parinda Ranasinghe at the historic Buddhist temple in the former capital, 115 kilometres northeast of Colombo.

He was installed at 10.38 a.m., a time deemed auspicious by astrologers, at the temple's octagonal-shaped balcony from where ancient Sri Lankan kings addressed the people.

Premadasa, replacing president Junius Jayewardene, who retires from public life after nearly 50 years in politics, took office as

Tamils, who are mostly Hindu, comprise 18 per cent of the island's 16 million people. They claim they are denied jobs and education by the predominantly Buddhist Sinhalese, who make up 75 per cent of the population and control the government.

India announced Sunday that two battalions of its 50,000 troops would be withdrawn in the next few days at Premadasa's request.

The Tamil Tigers, the most powerful separatist guerrilla group, Monday vowed to continue their fight against the Indian forces who were sent to the island to help crush their rebellion.

Eelam

"The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam pledged to con-

tinue its struggle against the Indian occupation forces until the total withdrawal from the Tamil homeland," the group said in a statement.

Indian Ambassador Jyotindra Nath Dixit told reporters up to 3,000 soldiers would be withdrawn in the next few days.

He said Premadasa made the request December 21, two days after election.

Troops were sent to Sri Lanka under an agreement signed in July 1987 by Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and outgoing Sri Lanka President Junius Jayewardene, aimed at ending the Tamil rebellion.

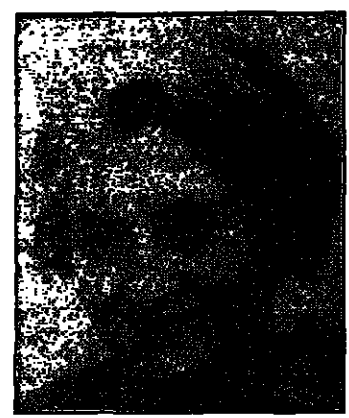
Dixit said Gandhi and Jayewardene discussed the agreement and the troop withdrawal Saturday during their visit to Islamabad for the meeting of South Asian leaders.

President rejects mercy petition

NEW DELHI (AP) — India's president Tuesday rejected the mercy petition of Kehar Singh, one of two Sikhs condemned to death for the 1984 assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

Press Trust of India and United News of India said President Ramaswamy Venkataraman refused to pardon or grant any relief to Singh.

The agencies gave no reason for the rejection, the last avenue left for a condemned man to save



Indira Gandhi

his life. With the rejection, UNI said, the stay against Kehar Singh's execution has been vacated.

In India condemned prisoners are hanged.

Tibetans march through Lhasa

LHASA (R) — Two hundred Tibetan students and teachers marched peacefully through Lhasa calling for greater use of their language and a ban on the use of weapons against demonstrators. Western and Tibetan sources said Monday.

They also said that an American tourist who was photographing the Friday march was detained at gunpoint and later released.

The sources said the march was legal and there was no interference from police, who rode in vehicles at the front and rear. They said the marchers planned another demonstration.

At least one person — a Buddhist monk waving the Tibetan flag of independence — was killed December 10 when police opened fire on demonstrators in

the city centre. Foreign diplomats believe the death toll is higher. Reports from Westerners in Tibet say that 50 people, including eight Buddhist nuns, have been arrested since the clash.

The sources said six plainclothes police detained American John Sevcik, pushing him into a jeep and holding a revolver to his head. His camera and film, along with the cameras and films of two European tourists, were also confiscated.

The marchers carried four banners, calling on the authorities to fulfil a promise made in July 1987 to use Tibetan as the language for all Tibetan affairs, for Tibetans to be able to follow their own customs and lifestyle and for weapons not to be used against demonstrators.

Psychological barriers, drugs SAARC obstacles

ISLAMABAD (R) — South Asian leaders have set their countries on a new path to fight the scourge of drugs and poverty while acknowledging that "wind-downs of the mind" need opening to ensure lasting progress.

The seven-nation South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was boosted by the first meeting of the young prime ministers of India and Pakistan at its fourth annual summit from December 29-31.

However, the region containing a fifth of the world's population still needs to break some of the barriers that have sprung up over decades of conflict and distrust.

"The most important of these barriers are the psychological barriers," said Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, 44, in his closing address to the leaders of Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

"It is the windows of the mind that first need uncurtaining," said the leader of the group's largest nation.

In three days of talks, including one session lasting more than six hours at a retreat in Islamabad's scenic Margalla hills, the seven vowed to fight the drug trade and alleviate the hardships of the poor by the year 2000.

The so-called "Islamabad Declaration" expressed "grave concern" over drug abuse, particu-

larly among young people. It declared 1989 "SAARC year for combating drug abuse and drug trafficking" and said the leaders "recognised the need for urgent and effective measures to eradicate this evil."

Bhutto, with a combination of charm and resolve, gave impetus to the organisation which in three years of existence had few concrete achievements to its credit. Bangladesh President Hussain Mohammed Ershad said in closing remarks that the summit had brought home the need to improve the lives of the common man.

Addressing Bhutto, he said: "You have injected fresh input, new insight and a dynamism that has vitalised our efforts."

The kings, presidents and prime ministers set out a project called "SAARC 2000" — a basic needs perspective.

"They were conscious that all South Asian countries faced problems in areas such as food, clothing, shelter, education, primary health care, population planning and environmental protection," the declaration said.

Ershad, conveying the importance of the project will carry for the region's impoverished millions, said it "could radically transform the living conditions and quality of life of all the peoples of the region."

Chinese, African officials attempt to quell uproar

PEKING (R) — African students should continue studying in China despite anti-black violence in Nanking and racial tension in the eastern city of Hangzhou, Chinese officials and African diplomats said Monday.

The diplomats said the training provided low-cost technical skills needed for development and that students would be sent here as long as China was willing to help.

A senior African diplomat, who asked not to be identified, said that representatives from several African embassies in Peking would go to Nanking later this week to help resolve the problems that led to the violence.

"We must work with our friends, the Chinese, to settle the problems," he said. "We have good and positive co-operation with China which provides excellent conditions for our students despite its huge population."

He and other diplomats praised Peking for offering scholarships to African students, noting that training in Western countries would be much costlier.

They said that they believed most African countries benefiting

from the scholarship programmes would continue to send students to China.

Racial violence forced more than 130 Africans to flee their dormitories at three colleges in the east China city of Nanking a week ago.

Thirteen people were injured in a clash between Africans and Chinese at Hehai University on Christmas Eve and one African student has been detained by police, according to the official media.

Thousands of Chinese students, some shouting racial slurs, took to the streets of Nanking on four nights last week.

In Hangzhou, about 250 kilometres to the east, African students boycotted classes and briefly took a professor hostage in protest over allegations by university employees that they were infected with the fatal disease AIDS.

"China admits more students from African countries than from other countries, indicating the importance attached to developing Sino-African ties," the New China News Agency said.



George Bush

Bush to declare himself elected

WASHINGTON (AP) — On Wednesday, Vice President George Bush will enter the House of Representatives and announce he has been elected president, 426 to 111, fulfilling a ritual that has been called constitutional Russian Roulette.

Bush's declaration to a joint session of Congress will come after the counting of the only ballots that really count under the constitution, those cast by the 538 members of the electoral college.

Yes, it's true that Bush won 53.4 per cent of the popular votes, defeating his Democratic rival, Michael Dukakis, who captured 45.6 per cent. It's true he got more than 7 million votes more than his opponent.

Castro says revolution will last

SANTIAGO (Agencies) — President Fidel Castro said that Cuba's Socialist revolution, which celebrated its 30th anniversary Sunday, would last at least 100 years.

Speaking from the same balcony where 30 years earlier he proclaimed "the revolution begins now," Castro reaffirmed the Socialist and Marxist-Leninist character of a revolution that managed to survive right in the U.S. backyard.

"Those who dream that the revolution can be defeated are fooling themselves," he said. "This revolution will turn 40, 50, 60 and will turn 100. We have no doubt about it and some day someone will come here and talk to you about Jan. 1, 1959."

Castro, 62, who has remained in power despite U.S. attempts to oust him, said that when the revolution began, there were only

Rangoon streets fill to mourn hero's widow

RANGOON (R) — Big crowds filled Rangoon streets Monday for the first time since a bloody army takeover in September as people turned out in strength for the funeral of the widow of national independence hero Aung San.

Witnesses said more than 100,000 people led by Buddhist monks and marshalled by students walked in procession behind the coffin of Khin Kyi, who died last Tuesday aged 75.

Some students defied the authorities by carrying banners of the National League for Democracy (NLD), the biggest opposition party, which is led by Aung San Suu Kyi, daughter of the deceased.

After the funeral the crowds dispersed peacefully. Aung San Suu Kyi and other family members walked behind the coffin, which was carried in a flower-strewn hearse in the slow procession through tree-shaded streets.

It moved from Khin Kyi's residence by Inya Lake to a grave in an area reserved for the nation's most respected citizens close to the Shwedagon Pagoda.

Groups of students, who were in the vanguard of last summer's thwarted uprising against military-ruled socialist rule, marched at the head of the procession carrying placards identifying their colleges. Many wore NLD badges.

Witnesses said at one point on the route near the university campus a small group began chanting pro-democracy slogans and waving banners, but this appeared to be an isolated incident.

The military authorities had warned against the funeral being turned into a political demonstration, saying it could lead to "another round of disturbances."

The security forces, who killed hundreds of demonstrators when they opened fire Sept. 18 to enforce the military takeover, kept a low profile with only small detachments of troops seen in the city.

"Quite a number of soldiers were in the procession itself and a couple of government ministers were seen in the vehicles that followed the walkers," one Western diplomat said.

High-ranking government, military, political and other officials as well as foreign diplomats took part in the procession which took about two hours to reach the grave under a hot sun.

There was no sign of Ne Win, the veteran leader who was a close lieutenant of Aung San during the independence struggle. Ne Win renounced his formal titles in July after leading the country for 26 years.

He has not been seen in public since then but Western diplomats in Rangoon believe he still pulls the political strings. There were unconfirmed reports here that he visited Khin Kyi's home the day after her death.

Rangoon Radio said General Saw Maung, head of the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council, Sunday attended funeral rites at Khin Kyi's home, where crowds had gathered to express their condolences since her death.

Khin Kyi, who died after being partially paralysed for months by a series of strokes, became a national political figure in her own right after the assassination of her husband in 1947.

The students who led last summer's mass uprising for democracy often marched beneath portraits of Aung San, the leader of the struggle for independence from Britain.

Column

Britons take holidays, have babies later

LONDON (R) — Britons are enjoying greater prosperity by taking more foreign holidays, watching more television and having babies later in life, according to a government handbook published Tuesday. Nearly two thirds of all households have a car, three quarters have central heating and eight out of 10 have a telephone, says "Britain 1989", a 480-page volume covering political, economic and social affairs. "Britain has experienced an economic recovery and is now in its eighth year of successive growth, with growth since 1980 being higher than in the other major European Community countries," it said. Contraception and a trend towards later marriage mean that the average age at which women have their first child in marriage has risen to 27, with most families having just two children. Over a third of all pregnancies in 1987 were conceived outside marriage, and of those, over a third were terminated by legal abortion.

Tower of Pisa leans even further

PISA (R) — The Leaning Tower of Pisa tilted over another 1.29 millimetres during 1988, its custodian announced Sunday. Professor Giuseppe Toniolo, in a year-end report, said the rate at which the tower's tilt worsened during 1988 was in line with the average since 1932, when efforts to stabilise it made the problem worse. Toniolo said that during 1988 about 750,000 people visited the 56-metre, 12th century tower whose extraordinary incline is caused by subsidence. Experts say the monument, which serves as the bell-tower to Pisa's cathedral and baptistry in a large grassed square, will fall over in about 100 years unless a way can be found to shore it up.

Montand gets used to father role

NICE (R) — French actor Yves Montand, 67, who became a father for the first time at the weekend, said Sunday he had not yet grown used to his new role. "I feel a bit bizarre, I have to keep pinching myself and saying, 'I've got a son' Montand, one of France's best-known screen lovers, said at a news conference. Montand's 28-year-old girlfriend Carole Amiel gave birth to a boy at an exclusive clinic in this southern French resort Saturday. "It poses a few problems because of my age, but I'm still very young. Life begins at 67," Montand said.

Gold haul seized

AMSTERDAM (AP) — A Swiss man carrying 2,250 pieces of gold concealed in his clothing has been arrested on smuggling charges. Dutch customs officials say. Gold jewelry weighing 24 kilograms and worth an estimated \$320,000 was discovered in the suspect's clothing, a customs spokesman speaking on condition of anonymity said Thursday. The suspect, a 28-year-old resident of Zurich, told officers he had been planning to sell the jewelry in Antwerp, Belgium, the spokesman said. The suspect, who was not identified in line with Dutch police practice, faces a \$154,950 fine and \$77,475 in tax and import duties, the spokesman said.

Smith turns a cheek

HARARE (AP) — Alec Smith, son of former Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith, is hoping to raise more than \$250,000 for starving children in a nation his father battled. The younger Smith has organised a "goal against hunger" soccer match between European champion PSV Eindhoven and Racing Club of Argentina. Latin America's current Super Cup winners. The Jan. 15 match will be the first of series of fund-raising soccer matches the 39-year-old Smith is planning to battle hunger in Mozambique. The money raised will buy food to be distributed through charities already working in Mozambique, including Save the Children, World Vision, Christian Care and the Zimbabwe Mozambique Friendship Association. Ian Smith led white-ruled Rhodesia during a bloody seven-year bush war that led to the independence of black-ruled Zimbabwe in 1980. Zimbabwean guerrilla bases in Mozambique were frequently attacked by Rhodesian troops. The younger Smith, who joined the Moral Re-orientation Movement in Switzerland in 1979, returned to independent Zimbabwe to serve as a Presbyterian Chaplain in a national army led by former guerrilla foes of his father.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Ethiopian rebels foil army advance

NAIROBI (R) — Rebels in Northern Ethiopia said Monday that they had foiled an attempt by government troops to break out of their main stronghold in Western Tigray Province. The clandestine radio of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation, said rebels killed or wounded 2,000 government troops as they tried to advance from the town of Inda Selassie last Friday. The TPLF said it captured 400 government soldiers, but gave no details of its own casualties. The rebel group says it has pinned down government troops in Inda Selassie since last July, and that it defeated two attempts to relieve the town in September and October. It said its guerrillas forced government troops to retreat in disarray Friday after trying to reopen the road from Inda Selassie to the neighbouring coastal province of Eritrea. The TPLF also said it defeated four brigades from the army's ninth division in another engagement Friday, but gave no details. The Ethiopian government rarely comments on military action in the north and has not reported any clashes recently.

1988 claimed 1,369 lives in El Salvador

SAN SALVADOR (AP) — The deaths of more than 1,300 people in El Salvador's civil war last year "summons us to keep striving for peace," Archbishop Arturo Rivera Damas said Sunday. The Roman Catholic Archbishop said in New Year's homily that 1,369 civilians, soldiers or leftist rebels were killed last year in military clashes, rightist death-squad slayings and car bombings or other terrorist acts. Rivera Damas customarily uses his homily to speak out against the war, which has claimed an estimated 65,000 lives since leftist rebels began battling the U.S.-backed government in 1979. The recent bombing of a Lutheran church shows "the path of irrational violence" El Salvador has taken, he said. Rivera Damas also expressed concern at the resurgence of the death squads.

Hirohito's internal bleeding continues

TOKYO (AP) — Japan's ailing Emperor remained in serious condition Monday from internal bleeding, while hundreds of well-wishers gathered at the imperial palace to sign New Year's greetings, officials said. The 87-year-old monarch, who has been bedridden since he first hemorrhaged Sept. 19, suffered internal bleeding overnight, said palace sources who asked not to be identified. A statement from the imperial household agency said that despite the internal bleeding, the Emperor had not discharged any blood and there was no major change in his condition.

IRA to answer for botched killings

BELFAST (AP) — Gerry Adams, the president of the Irish Republican Army's legal political wing Sinn Fein, has criticised the guerrilla group for killing civilians in bungled bombings. "My view is quite clear. I think the onus is on the IRA to safeguard the civilians from injury and death," Adams was quoted as saying in an interview with Sunday Life, a Belfast newspaper. Nineteen civilians have died in a series of botched IRA operations in the last 14 months. The outlawed IRA prides itself on targeting the security forces while sparing civilians in its fight to oust the British from Northern Ireland, and the blunders have drawn criticism even from some IRA supporters.

Reagan popular personally, policies less desirable

By Gary Langer
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Americans believe President Ronald Reagan has helped the rich and hurt the poor, but a wide majority nonetheless approve of his work in the White House, according to a national poll.

Majorities in the Media General-Associated Press survey gave negative grades to Reagan's social policies and ethics enforcement, rated his judgment unfavourably and said they would not have supported him for a third term.

At the same time, an overwhelming two-thirds approved of the way Reagan has done his job overall and said history will view him positively, and 55 per cent said he has bettered the nation.

The telephone survey was conducted among a random sample of 1,084 adults shortly after the Nov. 8 election. Reagan leaves office Jan. 20. The poll found two factors at the heart of Reagan's popularity: Wide belief that his economic

policies have helped the nation and high regard for his leadership. He also scored well on defence and U.S.-Soviet relations.

Reagan's ratings sagged elsewhere. While nearly two-thirds said his economic policies have been good for the nation, for example, an overwhelming 80 per cent rated his handling of the budget deficit negatively.

Moreover, 54 per cent said the poor are worse off economically as a result of Reagan's policies, and 72 per cent said wealthy Americans are better off. Opinion was more divided on the middle class: One-third called it worse off, a quarter said better off and the rest saw little change.

A third of respondents said they and their families were better off as a result of Reagan's efforts, and 18 per cent said they were worse off. But they split evenly when asked to score Reagan's handling of the economy, and more than twice as many picked the worst rating as chose the best. The poll gave "excellent" or



Ronald Reagan

"good" as positive choices, "only fair" or "poor" as negatives.

Reagan received negative ratings for his handling of every social issue posed: Civil rights, 51 per cent negative; education, 54 per cent negative; housing, 65 per cent negative; and welfare, 67 per cent negative. Six in 10 rated him negatively on his handling of

ethics in government.

Deficit, welfare, housing

In all these gauges, Reagan fared worst among Democrats, but he also was rated negatively by most independents. Majorities of Republicans endorsed him on most issues but not on the deficit, welfare or housing.

On two other issues, he scored extraordinarily well: Seven in 10 rated him favourably for defence policies and eight in 10 rated him positively on handling relations with the Soviets.

Six in 10 viewed Reagan's other foreign policies favourably. The poll was done before he opened contact with the Palestine Liberation Organisation last month.

Even with his mixed policy ratings, six in 10 respondents ranked Reagan positively for his accomplishments in office overall and two-thirds rated his leadership ability as excellent or good. A full three-quarters favourably rated his charisma

and ability to communicate.

On his judgment as president, 53 per cent rated him negatively. But he was seen as effective: Six in 10 said he has accomplished most of what he set out to do.

On his effectiveness, as in many other issues, Reagan did best with the youngest adults, age 18-29, and worst with the oldest, 65 and over. He also did considerably better with men than with women.

Fifty-two per cent said they would not have voted Reagan for a third term if he were legally allowed to seek one — down from 64 per cent.

When the Media General-AP poll asked the question last spring, Half the men polled, but just 37 per cent of the women, favoured a third Reagan term.

The survey, conducted Nov. 18-20, has a margin of error of plus or minus three percentage points.

Media General Inc., a communications company based in Richmond, Virginia, publishes four newspapers and operates three television stations.